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COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

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COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

VOLUME IX SPRING 1957 NUMBER 2

LES ARTISTES DE LA FAIM

CLAUDE VIGÉE

Que mettre à la place de cet infini qu'exige ma pensée?... Sans les désirs, que faire de la vie?—Sénancour, *Obermann.*

Was blieb ihm zu wünschen übrig?—Kafka, *Ein Hungerkünstler.*

I

LE SENS de la culpabilité hante nos lettres depuis le romantisme. Cette obsession du péché s'accompagne d'une soif de renoncement aux choses terrestres, d'un désir de libération des liens humains, entachés de souillure aux yeux sévères du juge intérieur. Mais le penchant ascétique prend chez Baudelaire, Lautréamont, G. Flaubert, Mallarmé, Kafka ou T. S. Eliot un caractère particulier, dont on ne trouve pas l'exemple dans la spiritualité traditionnelle de l'Occident.

Dans le cadre de celle-ci, l'âme qui renonce se dépouille de ses attaches grossières et se purifie afin de tendre vers une union plus intense, une communion plus profonde avec l'être—comme l'écrit Eliot lui-même dans les *Quatre Quatuors.* C'est, selon St. Jean de la Croix, le moyen "de posséder le Tout," et "d'être le Tout":

Para llegar a poseer el todo
No quieras poseer nada de nada.

Para llegar a ser el todo
No quieras ser nada de nada.

Tel est aussi le sens de ce verset-clef de l'Exode: "Alors Dieu fit faire au peuple *un détour* par le chemin du désert." Le renoncement ne prend donc pas ici de valeur en soi. Il ne saurait être considéré comme un mode de vie autonome, une vocation qui recèlerait en elle-même sa justification. Sa seule raison d'être réside dans l'intention transcendante qui anime ses démarches. Il correspond à l'épreuve subie par l'esprit qui s'efforce vers sa propre rédemption en se détachant de soi-

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même ainsi que des biens et des plaisirs de ce monde, où il ne trouve nulle perfection.

Or, à suivre l'expérience d'Eliot ou de Flaubert à travers leurs œuvres majeures, il devient clair que la route ignée du purgatoire, de la pénitence et de la contrition, n'est pas pour eux le moyen de salvation par excellence que l'on découvre, par exemple, dans le Livre de Job ou, plus près de nous, dans "Ce que dit la Bouche d'Ombre," "A Villequier" et "La Fin de Satan."

Passant de la première *Tentation de Saint-Antoine* à *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, du "Chant d'Amour de J. A. Prufrock" à la *Cocktail Party*, c'est en vain qu'on cherche les signes avant-coureurs du Noël sur terre qu'annoncèrent jadis les chœurs angéliques aux bergers de Galilée. Les trois Rois Mages du célèbre poème d'Eliot affrontent l'âpre hiver du monde étranger pour venir saluer l'Enfant nouveau-né. Quoique favorisés par un miracle, mis en présence du fils de Dieu, ils n'aspirent en fin de voyage qu'à la délivrance d'une "autre mort." La révélation de la divinité elle-même ne suffit pas pour les arracher, surgeons tardifs d'une culture agonisante, au marasme d'une existence absurde. L'allusion au "jardin" qui est faite dans *The Confidential Clerk* nous rappelle le refuge clos du Voltaire résigné de *Candide*, plus que les vergers verdoyants d'un nouvel Eden ouvert à tous les vents de la terre.

Rien dans l'œuvre centrale d'Eliot ne nous incite à penser que l'ascèse et la grâce puissent sauver une âme humaine *hic et nunc*, quelles que soient les circonstances. La conjoncture historique et sociale, l'héritage d'une civilisation corrompue, voilà les forces qui déterminent la destinée d'hommes isolés, coupés du courant de la vie, privés d'un organisme religieux actif et puissant—fussent-ils, comme les Rois Mages, des hommes de bonne volonté.

Par un curieux paradoxe, une conception déterministe et matérialiste de l'histoire semble triompher, dans l'univers temporel tout au moins—chez un poète chrétien nourri d'individualisme—de la croyance en la rédemption par la foi personnelle et l'amour divin. La randonnée des Rois Mages s'achève par un désir d'annihilation. La dissociation qu'Eliot opère entre l'existence humaine et la réalité éternelle aboutit à une sorte de manichéisme qui réduit toute la partie temporelle au néant, condamne l'homme charnel au désespoir final:

> I an old man,
> A dull head among windy places.

De façon semblable, l'obsession pénitentielle de la "chirurgie intellectuelle" égare Flaubert, à travers les marais de cauchemar de la deuxième *Tentation de Saint-Antoine*, dans le désert crétinisant de *Bouvard et Pécuchet*. Sa trajectoire mentale n'aboutit, elle aussi, qu'à une agonie indéfiniment prolongée. Le héros du *Château* de Kafka

s'épuise en vains efforts pour rejoindre celui qui l'a, croit-il, mandé: il est arrêté à chaque pas par la bureaucratie qui s'interpose entre le maître et lui. Les grilles du château demeurent ouvertes—mais c'est à l'insu du personnage qui n'en est informé qu'à l'instant où elles se sont refermées devant lui pour toujours. Dans certains passages de ses carnets, Kafka nous laisse entendre que l'abandon de toute activité mue par le désir, un comportement fait de pure attente et de quiétude, nous livreraient la réalité entière, qui viendrait d'elle-même se rouler à nos pieds. Mais, ajoute Kafka, l'homme, de par sa nature même, *ne sait pas attendre*: ainsi perd-il d'avance au jeu de la vie.

Chez ces écrivains les souffrances du purgatoire remplacent une destinée authentique. Elles se métamorphosent en absolu et deviennent une fin dernière, comme font les cellules cancéreuses qui détruisent les fonctions d'un organe en proliférant de façon désordonnée, et ne tendent qu'à leur propre accroissement. Une telle expérience est d'ordre compensatoire. Elle se substitue à l'idéal d'une salvation inhumaine, purement transcendante, dont l'éventualité se trouve ainsi remise *sine die*—refoulée de l'autre côté de la réalité. Ce monde-ci, nous dit un personnage-clef de la *Cocktail Party*, est le "mauvais endroit," "the wrong place," pour quiconque aspire à la joie intérieure.

La foi en la rédemption temporelle, écartée du domaine des possibilités conscientes, est remplacée par l'obsession pénitentielle. L'espoir en Dieu se transforme en déréliction éternelle. Dans l'univers immédiat tout est "sec, sans fin, privé de signification, inhumain." On ne peut y choisir qu'entre la ronde des cocktail-parties, le labyrinthe épuisant des obligations sociales—et le refus douloureux qui est également sans issue. La sensibilité moderne opte pour ce dernier. L'esprit nihiliste s'agrippe à ce *Non* avec la ténacité que décrit Sartre dans son étude psychologique de Baudelaire. Celui-ci ouvre en lui-même une parenthèse de stagnation. Il inaugure un état de mort vivante, dépourvue de projets vraiment humains, de finalité concrète, qui ne se résoudra que dans la désintégration corporelle. C'est la vision du *Voyage à Cythère*, la condition des "Hommes Creux" d'Eliot: "Life is very long."

Le bouclier opaque dont le poète recouvre sa vie temporelle le sauvera des flèches ardentes de la rédemption divine à laquelle il préfère se soustraire ("Je veux la liberté dans le salut," s'écria Rimbaud), ou dont, tout au moins, il voudrait éluder l'avènement en ce monde. Il prétend se réserver l'histoire, et se bouche les oreilles de peur d'entendre sonner la corne du rachat.

Le purgatoire prend alors l'apparence d'un compromis de nature équivoque. Tout en les accablant de souffrances morales et du sentiment de la faute, il préservera dans ces écrivains l'inviolable autonomie du moi. Leur conscience paie sa liberté au prix de son bonheur et se protège

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ainsi contre la tentation, redoutable entre toutes pour l'égoïsme qui la domine, de la béatitude impersonnelle au sein du Père.

Dans un passage caractéristique de Lautréamont, Maldoror s'indigne de laisser son âme à la merci de l'Etre dans le sommeil et le rêve: "Humiliation! Notre porte est ouverte à la curiosité du Céleste Bandit!" Il compare le regard du voyeur divin à "un implacable scalpel" qui le menacerait dans sa plus intime substance.

II

C'est donc avant tout une distance, une zone de sécurité infranchissable que ces poètes veulent maintenir entre leur moi et la terrible figure sacrée. Dans le mécanisme de défense de la personnalité, l'ascèse devient l'instrument de l'exorcisme proféré contre le divin, l'arme du *temps historique* dans la guerre de sécession qu'il ose entreprendre contre la présence éternelle de l'être. Que la formule soit orgueilleuse ou contrite, que le poète murmure "Seigneur, nous se sommes pas dignes," qu'il oppose avec Vigny "un froid silence / Au silence éternel de la divinité," ou qu'il lance un franc blasphème, le sens du rite demeure le même. Baudelaire amoureux de richesses troubles mêle à l'encens de la liturgie funèbre les vapeurs corrosives de la débauche, et souligne la parenté spirituelle de ces exercices pénitentiels, doublement ambigus.

La mortification à laquelle s'astreignent ces consciences ressemble à l' *Entbehrung* des mystiques chrétiens dans le mesure où elle bannit, elle aussi, le monde des sens et de l'imagination. Elle transforme celui-ci en un désert intolérable où l'âme meurt de soif sans trouver une goutte d'eau pour se désaltérer: souvenons-nous du paysage de roc aride que décrit le *Waste Land*, de l'atmosphère irrespirable où vivent les héros de Sénancour et de Constant, des affres d'*Igitur*, de la *Saison en Enfer*, des *Fleurs du Mal*. Partout la vie apparaît comme "une oasis d'horreur dans un désert d'ennui."

Mais le renoncement romantique permet en même temps à ceux qui le pratiquent de demeurer attachés, avec la force du désespoir, au noyau irréductible de leur individualité tout au long d'une existence désenchantée. L'Artiste de la Faim de Kafka, questionné *in articulo mortis* sur le choix de son extraordinaire profession, confesse l'origine purement égoïste de sa vocation: ce qui fut d'abord un moyen facile de se faire admirer devint, dans l'échec, un jeûne perpétuel parce que l'Artiste n'a jamais trouvé ici-bas d'aliments vraiment désirables. Le monde n'est pas à son goût. Est-ce sa faute? Il est tout refus envers la situation terrestre et la création qui le porte. Quoiqu'il implore le pardon d'autrui, il reste fidèle à sa vocation surhumaine, repousse la main qui voudrait le nourrir, et se laisse mourir d'inanition dans sa cage.

Dans son court dialogue final avec le surveillant, l'Artiste fait la

confession suivante: "Ihr solltet es aber nicht bewundern [mein Hungern] ... Weil ich hungern muß, ich kann nicht anders ... Weil ich nicht die Speise finden konnte, die mir schmeckt. Hätte ich sie gefunden, glaube mir, ich hätte kein Aufsehen gemacht und mich vollgegessen wie du und alle." L'Artiste, mort de faim, balayé hors de la cage puis enterré "avec la paille et tout," est remplacé par une magnifique panthère dont la joie de vivre fascine les spectateurs qui se pressent autour de la prison où elle est enfermée. Kafka note cruellement: "Es war eine selbst dem stumpfsten Sinn fühlbare Erholung, in dem so lange öden Käfig dieses wilde Tier sich herumwerfen zu sehn ... Dieser edle, mit allem Nötigen bis knapp zum Zerreissen ausgestattete Körper schien auch die Freiheit mit sich herumzutragen; irgendwo im Gebiß schien sie zu stecken; und die Freude am Leben kam mit derart starker Glut aus seinem Rachen, daß es für die Zuschauer nicht leicht war, ihr standzuhalten."

Comme l'a bien vu Eliseo Vivas dans son essai "Kafka's Distorted Mask" (*Kenyon Review*, 1948), l'orgueil intellectuel est la pierre d'achoppement contre laquelle viennent buter les héros du *Procès* et du *Château*. Joseph K., allant à son exécution, se donne le conseil suivant, d'une ironie sans pareille: "La seule chose que je puisse faire désormais ... est de préserver mon intelligence, calme et lucide jusqu'à la fin."— "Or, écrit Vivas, c'est précisément l'échec de sa lucide intelligence qui a poussé K. dans le cul-de-sac où il se trouve. En effet, ce n'était pas une telle résignation que la situation exigeait de lui, mais la confession de sa culpabilité, une contrition authentique. Voilà justement ce que le prêtre avait essayé de lui faire comprendre dans la cathédrale. Cependant Joseph K. possédait une intelligence trop lucide, il était trop fier de la primauté de son intelligence, pour écouter cet avis." De même dans le *Château*, "la culpabilité est provoquée ... par l'orgueil de ceux qui ne veulent pas servir; elle se rattache ainsi à la plus ancienne de toutes les fautes, celle qui amena la chute qui précède celle de l'homme." Kafka, découvrant au cœur du rationnel des valeurs qui transcendent la raison et l'expérience, s'obstine à formuler celles-ci en termes rationalistes et empiriques, incapables de les traduire ou de s'y adapter. Son œuvre et son idéologie arrivent à une impasse que l'abandon de son empirisme naturaliste pourrait seul éviter. Mais c'est là que Kafka se raidit et dit non. Le satanisme des héros de Kafka trouve plus d'un écho dans les *Journaux* intimes du romancier, surtout ceux des années 1921-22, écrits peu après l'*Artiste de la Faim*. Il faudrait les citer presque tout entiers: ils révèlent, sous son aspect négatif, le sens de "l'assaut contre les dernières frontières terrestres," qui est au centre de l'entreprise de Kafka, et donnent sa vraie profondeur à la remarque de Kafka selon laquelle il aurait exprimé les tendances négatrices de son temps.

D'un côté Kafka témoigne, dans ces *Journaux* des dernières années,

de sa tendance invincible à l'isolement, au refus de recevoir et de se donner. Par ailleurs il manifeste sa terreur de l'écrasement par la vie et l'avenir, son angoisse à porter sur ses frêles épaules une responsabilité universelle. Comme Narcisse, il n'est curieux que de sa seule essence ; à l'autisme se rattache l'obsession ironique de l'analyse de soi : "Unentrinnbare Verpflichtung zur Selbstbeobachtung : Werde ich von jemandem andern beobachtet, muß ich mich natürlich auch beobachten, werde ich von niemandem sonst beobachtet, muß ich mich um so genauer beobachten" (7 novembre 1921). A la peur du devoir humain se lie la vocation du poète-ascète. Pourquoi Kafka se choisit-il Artiste de la Faim ? Il nous le fait comprendre d'abord de manière indirecte, en décrivant une situation contraire, le rêve irréalisable qui l'a tant hanté : le père assis près du berceau de son enfant, en face de la mère. Lui, qui est possédé "par le désir sauvage d'une ascendance, du mariage, d'une postérité," sent alors s'éveiller en lui le sentiment singulier du soulagement existentiel : "Es kommt nicht mehr auf dich an, es sei denn, daß du es willst." A cette délivrance du faix de la vie future s'oppose l'accablement de l'homme du refus, emmuré dans sa chair privée, dépourvu de descendance qui ferait la relève de son être : "Dagegen das Gefühl des Kinderlosen : immerfort kommt es auf dich an, ob du es willst oder nicht, jeden Augenblick bis zum Ende, jeden nervenzerrenden Augenblick, immerfort kommt es auf dich an und ohne Ergebnis." D'où la conclusion déchirante : "Sisyphus war ein Junggeselle." L'homme solitaire est éternellement sous le poids de l'existence, personne ne vient le libérer de son destin ou lui offrir un bras secourable. Ecrasé par l'imminence du monde et de la vie, il trouve intolérable la condition de totale responsabilité à l'égard de l'existence. Elle le pousse à l'art du jeûne perpétuel, qui est une manière d'échapper au "Tout dépend toujours de toi" ; mais celle-ci s'effectue sans contrepartie extérieure, sans risque de se perdre en assumant l'image du berceau et de l'épouse, qui menace l'autonomie de Narcisse. La vision de l'enfant et du mariage étant tenue pour irréalisable, le Sisyphe kafkaesque *tourne* sa condition en se faisant Artiste de la Faim. Incapable de sortir de lui-même, d'accepter la paternité qui le délivrerait de la pression d'exister solitaire et responsable, Kafka trouve dans cette vocation ascétique l'unique échappatoire au "Tout dépend de toi" qui le poursuit.

L'Artiste de la Faim, dans le schéma mental de Kafka, est l'équivalent renversé de la paternité, l'image négative d'une fertilité convoitée mais interdite. Les damnés dantesques conçoivent l'enfer comme l'absence éternelle de la divinité et souffrent justement de leur indépendance à l'égard de l'Etre. De même chez Kakfa, fermeture sur soi et agonie sont identiques : "denn der Zustand der Qual ist für mich ohne Rest nichts anderes als in sich verschlossene, gegen alles verschlossene Qual,

nichts darüber hinaus." Aussi aspire-t-il, comme au plus grand des bonheurs, à un instant d'oubli de soi, de ses limites intérieures. Il considère comme un miracle un court sursis à son emmurement, sans jamais pouvoir vraiment y croire lorsqu'il se produit. Dort-il quatre ou cinq heures d'affilée, le voilà tourmenté par l'idée démentielle de sa faute: "Denn nun kam der nicht abzuwehrende Gedanke: so viel Glück verdienst du nicht, alle Götter der Rache stürtzten auf mich herab . . ." Se fuir devient le seul but, que sa propre présence aussitôt lui interdit: "Es würde mir genügen, den Platz, auf dem ich stehe, als einen andern erfassen zu können."

Le choix de sa vocation d'Artiste de la Faim, et le détail de cette condition, sont éclaircis par diverses remarques de Kafka. Il note le 17 octobre 1921: "Dahinter, daß ich nichts Nützliches gelernt habe und mich—was zusammenhängt—auch körperlich verfallen ließ, kann eine Absicht liegen. Ich wollte unabgelenkt bleiben, unabgelenkt durch die Lebensfreude eines nützlichen und gesunden Mannes. Als ob Krankheit und Verzweiflung nicht zumindest ebenso ablenken würden!" Il ne tente pas simplement de soustraire son propre esprit et son corps à l'influence "distrayante" de la vie. Il proteste aussi contre la dépendance du langage littéraire à l'égard de celle-ci. Tel qu'il se désire lui-même, il le voudrait sans rapports avec les hommes et les choses, "eigengesetzlich," régi par sa propre loi. Or l'écriture est privée d'une telle autonomie, en proie "à la bonne qui allume le feu, à la chatte qui s'engourdit près du poêle, même à l'homme vieux et pauvre qui se réchauffe." Il se désole de constater que l'art d'écrire est objet de délaissement: "Nur das Schreiben ist hilflos, wohnt nicht in sich selbst, ist Spaß und Verzweiflung." Il s'interroge le 19 octobre 1921 sur "la nature de la vocation du désert." Comme Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Mallarmé, Flaubert, T. S. Eliot, il trouve "le chemin du désert" identique avec l'existence elle-même: "Nicht weil sein Leben zu kurz war, kommt Moses nicht nach Kanaan, sondern weil es ein menschliches Leben war. Dieses Ende der fünf Bücher Moses hat eine Ähnlichkeit mit der Schlußszene der 'Education Sentimentale.' "

Kafka, on le voit, reconnaît ses affinités psychologiques et littéraires. Comme l'Artiste de son récit, il prend la responsabilité du désastre: "Die systematische Zerstörung meiner selbst im Laufe der Jahre ist erstaunlich, es war wie ein langsam sich entwickelnder Dammbruch, eine Aktion voll Absicht." Dans un autre passage révélateur de ce lent suicide il confesse: "Ich habe, wenn man es danach beurteilt, unrecht, wann ich mich beklage, daß mich der Lebensstrom niemals ergriffen hat, daß ich von Prag nie loskam, niemals auf Sport oder auf ein Handwerk gestossen wurde und dergleichen—ich hätte das Angebot immer abgelehnt, ebenso wie die Einladung zum Spiel. Nur das Sinnlose bekam Zutritt, das Jußstudium, das Bureau . . ." Sa vie se fait sciemment

dans le sens de la négation et du malheur; il choisit lui-même les instruments de sa ruine. Il conserve en même temps, avec sa tragique lucidité, l'intuition de la splendeur de la vie qu'il suffirait de conjurer. Encore faut-il la désirer, trouver pour elle l'unique mot juste, le nom qui est amour, se résoudre enfin à proférer l'appel merveilleux: "Es ist sehr gut denkbar, daß die Herrlichkeit des Lebens um jeden und immer in ihrer ganzen Fülle bereitlegt, aber verhängt, in der Tiefe, unsichtbar, sehr weit. Aber sie liegt dort, nicht feindselig, nicht widerwillig, nicht taub. Ruft man sie mit dem richtigen Wort, beim richtigen Namen, dann kommt sie. Das ist das Wesen der Zauberei, die nicht schafft, sondern ruft."

A la place de cet appel, Kafka reconnaît qu'il a pratiqué systématiquement le refus. Il s'est rétracté sur lui-même. Il discerne "meine innere Möglichkeiten für (ich will nicht sagen Darstellung oder Dichtung des 'Geizigen,' sondern für) den Geizigen selbst." Son être entier, comme un orchestre en attente, se tend fasciné vers le pupitre où doit surgir la baguette toute-puissante de l'avarice. Dans ce vice idéal, le repliement sur soi trouverait sa consécration finale. Est-ce orgueil ou abdication panique devant les exigences du dehors? il préfère s'esquiver, ignorer les avances du monde qui l'assaille: "Ich lehnte immer ab, wohl aus allgemeiner und besonders aus Willensschwäche, ich habe das verhältnismäßig sehr spät erst begriffen. Ich hielt diese Ablehnung früher meist für ein gutes Zeichen (verführt durch die allgemeinen großen Hoffnungen, die ich auf mich setzte), heute ist nur noch ein Rest dieser freundlichen Auffassung geblieben." Cette politique du refus continuel, fondée sur la présomption, l'enferme dans un no man's land: "Dieses Grenzland zwischen Einsamkeit und Gemeinschaft habe ich nur äußerst selten überschritten, ich habe mich darin sogar mehr angesiedelt als in der Einsamkeit selbst. Was für ein lebendiges schönes Land war im Vergleich hiezu Robinsons Insel." On distingue bien là la vocation de l'Artiste, qui jeûne, mais en public, dans une cage de cirque, pour qu'on admire son art. A la fois séparé et consumé de désir, il exhibe sa solitude pour une foule d'indifférents. Cette ambiguïté lui est fatale: "Ich bleibe doch vielleicht in Kanaan—und inzwischen bin ich schon längst in der Wüste."

Faisant à partir de tous ces éléments le bilan de son existence, Kafka résume l'histoire de sa sensibilité de la façon suivante:

Die Entwicklung war einfach. Als ich noch zufrieden war, wollte ich unzufrieden sein und stieß mich mit allen Mitteln der Zeit und der Tradition, die mir zugänglich waren, in die Unzufriedenheit, nun wollte ich zurückkehren können. Ich war also immer unzufrieden, auch mit meiner Zufriedenheit. Merkwürdig, daß aus Komödie bei genügender Systematik Wirklichkeit werden kann. Mein geistiger Niedergang begann mit kindischem, allerdings kindisch-bewußtem Spiel. Ich ließ zum Beispiel Gesichtsmuskeln künstlich zusammenzucken, ich ging mit hinter

dem Kopf gekreuzten Armen über den Graben. Kindlich-widerliches, aber erfolgreiches Spiel. (Ähnlich war es mit der Entwicklung des Schreibens, nur daß diese Entwicklung leider später stockte.) Wenn es möglich ist, auf diese Weise das Unglück herbeizuzwingen, sollte alles herbeizwingbar sein. Ich kann, so sehr mich die Entwicklung zu widerlegen scheint und so sehr es überhaupt meinem Wesen widerspricht, so zu denken, auf keine Weise zugeben, daß die ersten Anfänge meines Unglücks innerlich notwendig waren, sie mögen Notwendigweit gehabt haben, aber nicht innerliche, sie kamen angeflogen wie Fliegen und wären so leicht wie sie zu vertreiben gewesen... Warum vergrößere ich aber dann das Unglück, auf diesem Ufer zu sein, durch die Sehnsucht nach dem andern?

Dans une page datée du 29 janvier 1922, Kafka fait un suprême effort pour comprendre son destin et met enfin le doigt dans la plaie; l'artiste de la faim donne la clef de son mystère. Lui, dont l'ombre est trop grande, et qui met l'énergie du désespoir à vivre *dans* cette ombre démesurée, lui qui s'estime partout délaissé, même à Prague sa "patrie," le voilà conscient de l'origine de ce sentiment d'abandon:

Zwar nicht von den Menschen verlassen, das wäre nicht das schlimmste, ich könnte ihnen nachlaufen, solange ich lebe, sondern von mir in Beziehung auf die Menschen, von meiner Kraft in Beziehung auf die Menschen, ich habe Liebende gern, aber ich kann nicht lieben, ich bin zu weit, bin ausgewiesen, habe, da ich doch Mensch bin und die Wurzeln Nahrung wollen, auch dort 'unten' (oder oben) meine Vertreter, klägliche ungenügende Komödianten, die mir nur deshalb genügen können (freilich, sie genügen mir gar nicht und deshalb bin ich so verlassen), weil meine Hauptnahrung von andern Wurzeln in anderer Luft kommt, auch diese Wurzeln kläglich, aber doch lebensfähiger... Aber ich bin anderswo, nur die Anziehungskraft der Menschenwelt ist ungeheuerlich, in einem Augenblick kann sie alles vergessen machen. Aber auch die Anziehungskraft meiner Welt ist groß, diejenigen, die mich lieben, lieben mich, weil ich 'verlassen' bin, und zwar vielleicht doch nicht als Weißsches Vakuum, sondern weil sie fühlen, daß ich die Freiheit der Bewegung, die mir hier völlig fehlt, auf einer anderen Ebene in glücklichen Zeiten habe.

Comment ne pas penser à Baudelaire à la lecture de ces lignes? Kafka précise l'origine et le sens de son délaissement dans une note déchirante du 12 février de la même année:

Die abweisende Gestalt, die ich immer traf, war nicht die, welche sagt: "Ich liebe dich nicht," sondern welche sagt: "Du kannst mich nicht lieben, so sehr du es willst, du liebst unglücklich die Liebe zu mir, die Liebe zu mir liebt dich nicht." Infolgedessen ist es unrichtig zu sagen, das ich das Wort "Ich liebe dich" erfahren habe, ich habe nur die wartende Stille erfahren, welche von meinem "Ich liebe dich" hätte unterbrochen werden sollen, nur das habe ich erfahren, sonst nichts.

Il est hanté désormais par la pensée de sa complicité dans l'échec de son existence: il s'est lui-même mutilé!

Die Angst beim Rodeln, die Ängstlichkeit des Gehens auf glatten Schneeboden... bringt wieder den lange unbeachteten, immer naheliegenden Gedanken herauf, ob nicht doch nur der irrsinnige Eigennutz, die Angst um mich, und zwar nicht die Angst um ein höheres Ich, sondern die Angst um mein gemeines Wohlbefinden, die Ursache meines Niederganges war, so freilich, daß ich aus mir selbst den

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Rächer geschickt habe (ein besonderes: die-rechte-Hand-weiß-nicht-was-die-linke-tut). In meiner Kanzlei wird noch immer gerechnet, als finge mein Leben erst morgen an, indessen bin ich am Ende.

Devant ces confessions d'une terrible franchise, nous comprenons mieux pourquoi le terrier, la cage où l'on s'enferme volontairement, sont pour Kafka la situation humaine typique, et pour quelles raisons l'Artiste de la Faim, aux yeux de Kafka, choisit la seule vocation possible sur terre. L'Artiste substitue aux terreurs qu'inflige le monde l'enfer demi-privé de sa solitude. Il manifeste sa préférence pour un sort qui le sépare d'autrui dans l'agonie elle-même. Aussi, malgré le caractère public de celle-ci, la réconciliation dans la douleur commune devient impensable. Elle est exclue du domaine des possibilités, autant que la station devant le berceau en face de la mère, autant que le Oui de la joie universelle, qu'un appel improférable, suffirait pourtant à susciter hors des profondeurs où elle se cache. Le choix qu'opère la sensibilité de Kafka est dans la direction contraire, comme l'est aussi celui de Mallarmé ou de T. S. Eliot: "Mein Leben ist das Zögern vor der Geburt."

Dans quelles perspectives historiques, au milieu de quel contexte social se fit cette orientation négative? Quels sont les rapports, passés et présents, de l'Artiste de la Faim avec le public pour lequel il travaille? "In den letzten Jahrzehnten ist das Interesse an Hungerkünstlern sehr zurückgegangen. Während es sich früher gut lohnte, große derartige Vorführungen in eigener Regie zu veranstalten, ist dies heute völlig unmöglich. Es waren andere Zeiten." L'artiste détrôné s'abaisse au rôle de comparse, il se fait engager dans un cirque. Relégué du côté des écuries, il accepte, sans oser protester, cette place humiliante. Conscient de la fragilité de sa position, il évite ainsi de rappeler à la direction "daß er, genau genommen, nur ein Hindernis auf dem Weg zu den Ställen war. Ein kleines Hindernis, allerdings, ein immer kleinerwerdendes Hindernis . . . Er mochte so gut hungern als er nur konnte, und er tat es; aber nichts konnte ihn mehr retten, man ging an ihm vorüber . . . Denn nicht der Hungerkünstler betrog, er arbeitete ehrlich, aber die Welt betrog ihn um seinen Lohn . . . Womit sollte man ihn auch trösten? Was blieb ihm zu wünschen übrig?"

Kafka note ici, avec sa précision meurtrière, le déclin du rôle social de l'artiste dans la modernité. Depuis les Romantiques jusqu'à Kafka ou Beckett, la misère morale de l'artiste s'accroît, et le caractère marginal de sa situation: désormais, c'est tout juste si on le tolère. A mesure que sa détresse grandit, son orgueil se cache sous des apparences de plus en plus ambiguës et trompeuses. Il se targue de sa défaite; à défaut de mieux, il s'en sert comme d'un défi à l'égard du monde et du Créateur. La complaisance féroce dans l'échec devient la dernière, l'imprenable forteresse de l'"hybris" faustienne. L'artiste romantique du

type byronien avait dû accepter la perte de la Puissance; du moins lui restait-il la Gloire, revendiquée hautement encore par ses successeurs symbolistes et nietzschéens. Maintenant la Gloire est allée rejoindre la Puissance aux oubliettes des illusions perdues. Dans l'œuvre de Kafka, et dans le roman français actuel, cette évolution prend toute son ampleur.

Chez Maurice Blanchot, encore, la conscience domine ses accidents. Elle se cherche en se détachant des apparences, et se pressent dans un abîme de solitude, de silence et de vide. Ici, come chez Mallarmé, la conscience reste en un certain sens l'héroïne de l'action psychique. Sans doute opère-t-elle au sein d'une absence de réalité; mais elle demeure au centre. *Elle est le centre.* Le monde de Samuel Beckett, aussi, est vu de façon subjective, profondément tragique; mais cette souffrance n'a plus rien de glorieux. Le sujet subissant perd son importance focale, il ne compte pas plus que le milieu extérieur dévalué. N'est-ce pas là le sens profond de "La Métamorphose" de Kafka? L'orgueil romantique, répudié, se voit remplacé par un autre, plus subtil, contradictoire même—un autisme nihiliste dont le mouvement est bien mis en relief dans *La Chute*, le dernier ouvrage d'Albert Camus.

Le moi, jadis exalté par la tradition cartésienne et romantique, devient chez Beckett et Kafka un sujet interchangeable, anonyme et souffrant; il se mue en une loque perdue dans un univers de loques, d'impuissance et de déchets. La science de l'Innommable, c'est l'existence elle-même—pur regard de détresse inhumaine. Expérience proprement indicible, parce qu'elle s'ouvre, comme celle de Blanchot, sur le gouffre. Cependant, à la différence de celui-ci, le moi dans l'œuvre de Beckett subit une radicale désagrégation intérieure.

Chez Beckett, les personnages qui occupent la scène sont invertébrés. *Il ne prétendent même plus* posséder une ossature secrète. Ils ne se réfèrent à rien ni à personne, fût-ce à eux-mêmes: finie, en eux, l'arrogance de l'homme faustien qui domina l'imagination occidentale depuis l'époque de Marlowe. Dans les romans de Beckett on ne trouve plus trace de cet activisme forcené dont Spengler et Malraux, hier encore, nous offraient le douteux exemple. Le Jean-Baptiste Clamence de Camus, les personnages de Beckett et de Kafka parachèvent en eux-mêmes la destruction lente de l'être que leur prépara tout le romantisme européen. La métamorphose de l'être en néant est la forme ultime, irréductible, de l'orgueil dont Satan, l'artiste du refus suprême, reste possédé au tréfonds creux et gelé de l'enfer.

III

Le pur vase d'aucun breuvage
Que l'inexhaustible veuvage
Agonise mais ne consent

Naïf baiser des plus funèbres!
A rien expirer annonçant
Une rose dans les ténèbres.

Il n'est que de puiser dans les poèmes de Mallarmé qui sont dans toutes les mémoires pour faire apparaître les thèmes principaux de cette œuvre qui est fondée, à l'instar de celle de Kakfa, sur la négation de la vie, le refus des nourritures terrestres. "Ecoutez, ma race, avant de souffler ma bougie—le compte que j'ai à vous rendre de ma vie—Ici: névrose, ennui (ou Absolu!)." Igitur déteste entendre "les pulsations de son propre cœur," sa nostalgie va vers l'ailleurs des ténèbres: "Je n'aime pas ce bruit: cette perfection de ma certitude me gêne: tout est trop clair, la clarté montre le désir d'une évasion; tout est trop luisant, j'aimerais rentrer en mon Ombre incréée et antérieure, et dépouiller par la pensée le travestissement que m'a imposé la nécessité, d'habiter le cœur de cette race (que j'entends battre ici) seul reste d'ambiguïté." Son maître Baudelaire offrait la mort seule comme nourriture à "ceux qui veulent manger / Le lotus parfumé! C'est ici qu'on vendange / Les fruits miraculeux dont votre cœur a faim." Mallarmé aussi, depuis sa jeunesse, a été contempteur du réel, artiste de la faim. Dès 1864 il conseille au mendiant, dans "Aumône":

Et surtout ne va pas, drôle, acheter du pain.

Ce drôle ne deviendra son frère que dans la version finale de 1867. Le texte initial de 1862 suggérait au clochard l'achat d'un coutelas. La tentation du vide, du suicide "victorieusement fui," la terreur de la stérilité choisie pour elle-même, l'accablement coupable qu'éprouve la conscience "pour n'avoir pas chanté la région où vivre," sont au centre de l'inspiration mallarméenne. L'écœurement de l'ici-bas l'incite à risquer le bond fatal dans l'absolu néant, "au risque de tomber pendant l'éternité":

Ainsi, pris du dégoût de l'homme à l'âme dure
Vautré dans le bonheur, où ses seuls appétits
Mangent, et qui s'entête à chercher cette ordure
Pour l'offrir à sa femme allaitant ses petits,

Je fuis et je m'accroche à toutes les croisées
D'où l'on tourne l'épaule à la vie...

Ces vers semblent annoncer les passages de Kafka précédemment cités. Dans l'Ouverture Ancienne d'*Hérodiade* on retrouve la hantise du "diamant pur de quelque étoile, mais / Antérieure, qui ne scintilla jamais." Hérodiade est l'archétype de l'âme fermée sur elle-même, ascète par orgueil, éprise d'inhumaine pureté, qui règne dans notre littérature depuis le romantisme. La nourrice la tente en évoquant l'amant, le monde des créatures dont elle refuse de faire part:

... et pour qui, dévorée
D'angoisses, gardez-vous la splendeur ignorée
Et le mystère vain de votre être ?
H.:
Pour moi.

Acculée à l'extrême solitude, l'héroïne réalise enfin son indépendance totale. A ce moment, elle implore, comme l'Artiste de la Faim, le pardon de la nourrice, qui symbolise ici la nature procréatrice, la foule anonyme des êtres, rôle que tient le surveillant dans l'histoire de Kafka:

Hérodiade:
O charme dernier, oui ! je le sens, je suis seule.
La Nourrice:
Madame allez-vous donc mourir ?
Hérodiade:
Non, pauvre aïeule,
Sois calme, et, t'éloignant, pardonne à ce cœur dur,
Mais avant, si tu veux, clos les volets, l'azur
Séraphique sourit dans les vitres profondes,
Et je déteste, moi, le bel azur !

Le Faune, quoique séparé du monde par l'ivresse et le sommeil, s'enchantait encore de ses stupres imaginaires: "Aimai-je un rêve?" Hérodiade, elle, n'est plus tentée par le songe. Elle se réserve lucidement à "son pur regard de diamant." De même, dans le *Cantique de Saint Jean*, la tête décapitée de l'ascète, émaciée par le jeûne, rejoint dans les hauteurs glacées le regard qui aspirait à cette altitude surhumaine:

Qu'elle de jeûnes ivre
S'opiniâtre à suivre
En quelque bon hagard
Son pur regard

Là-haut où la froidure
Eternelle n'endure
Que vous la surpassiez
Tous ô glaciers

Enfin, dans le célèbre sonnet de 1887, "Mes bouquins refermés sur le nom de Paphos," qui clôt le recueil des *Poésies* de Mallarmé, se trouve la profession de foi de l'Artiste de la Faim:

Il m'amuse d'élire avec mon seul génie
Une ruine...

Ma faim d'aucuns fruits ici ne se régale
Trouve en leur docte manque une saveur égale:
Qu'un éclate de chair humain et parfumant!

Le pied sur quelque guivre où notre amour tisonne,
Je pense plus longtemps peut-être éperdument
A l'autre, au sein brûlé de l'antique amazone.

IV

Chez T. S. Eliot, disciple de Mallarmé, la révulsion devant l'existence constitue le thème principal de l'œuvre entière, lyrique autant que dramatique. Rimbaud avait subi, lui aussi, la tentation du jeûne métaphysique. Mais, chez lui, la vocation de l'Artiste de la Faim est supplantée par l'appel magique dont parle Kafka. De ce fait, le sens de son aventure est autre ; il tend a recréer l'univers à partir des éléments :

> Si j'ai du goût ce n'est guère
> Que pour la terre et les pierres.
> Je déjeune toujours d'air,
> De roc, de charbons, de fer.

Au contraire, chez Eliot, héritier des Jansénistes et de Saint Augustin, ce que Camus appelle "la calomnie du monde" est poussé à son plus haut degré d'intensité. Eliot compare a une malédiction la conception charnelle elle-même :

> A curse comes to being
> As a child is formed.

L'anathème inhérent à l'existence pèse sur la Terre Gaste mythique de l'univers moderne, comme sur le domaine seigneurial de Wishwood (la forêt des souhaits) où se situe l'action de *La Réunion de Famille*. Vivre ici devient synonyme de rester sur sa faim. Dans un monde où le printemps même est chargé de tourments, l'hiver du jeûne paraît préférable. Ce raisonnement, qui semble échappé des lèvres de l'Artiste de Kafka, constitue l'ouverture du *Waste Land* :

> Winter kept us warm, covering
> Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
> A little life with dried tubers.

Dans *La Réunion de Famille*, Mary revient à cette image de la plante engourdie sous la neige dont l'agonie recommence au printemps :

> The cold spring now is the time
> For the ache in the moving root
> The agony in the dark ...
> These are the ones that suffer least :
> The aconite under the snow
> And the snowdrop crying for a moment in the wood.

Kafka se considérait "mort de son vivant, le véritable survivant." Comme lui, les personnages des poèmes et des pièces d'Eliot sont tous des morts-vivants : "Il faut nombre d'années pour découvrir que l'on est mort." A leurs yeux les données de l'existence elle-même semblent intolérables. Ainsi Harry Lord Monchensey, le héros de *La Réunion de Famille*, dit à ses proches :

"It is not my conscience,
Not my mind, that is diseased, but the world I have to live in."

A la façon de Baudelaire, de Mallarmé, de G. Benn, Eliot considère "La terre entière comme notre hôpital." Guérir, ici-bas, c'est mourir, notre unique santé étant la maladie même. "There is no relief but in grief." Lord Monchensey voit dans le monde une masse de débris ; ces décombres subsistent d'un désastre gigantesque et irrémédiable, dont sa ruine personnelle n'est qu'un reflet :

But it begins to seem just part of some huge disaster,
Some monstrous mistake and aberration
Of all men, of the world, which I cannot put in order.

L'unique action possible, désormais, consiste dans la rupture. Le seul désir concevable est de se purger, par l'agonie, la solitude et la mort, de l'universelle impureté.

You don't understand me.
You can't understand me. It's not being alone
That is the horror, to be alone with the horror.
What matters is the filthiness. I can clean my skin,
Purify my life, void my mind,
But always the filthiness, that lies a little deeper.

Le dégoût radical et la manie purgatoriale prennent dans l'âme de Lord Monchensey, ce héros typique de l'œuvre d'Eliot, la place même de l'amour : "You attach yourself to loathing / As others do to loving," lui déclare Mary, sa cousine, avec laquelle il a passé les rares moments heureux de son enfance. De même, le personnage de l'Artiste de la Faim émerge, dans Kafka, de l'impossibilité d'aimer, de devenir le père veillant son enfant au berceau, vis-à-vis de la mère.

"Ash Wednesday," un poème dont le nom seul évoque le jeûne expiatoire, célèbre la gloire négative du délaissement, symbolisé ici par la dispersion funèbre des ossements desséchés. Le poète ascète se détourne des biens ingrats offerts par "l'heure positive," le monde de la nature et de la procréation ; il ne peut boire là où les arbres fleurissent et où les fontaines sourdent :

Because I do not hope to know again
The infirm glory of the positive hour . . .
Because I cannot drink
There, where the trees flower and springs flow,
for there is nothing again . . .

Comme jadis Lamartine, dans "L'Isolement" ou "Le Vallon," Eliot ne trouve de soulagement que dans l'oubli de la destinée humaine. Pareils aux "Hommes Creux" qui végètent au "pays des cactus," les ossements desséchés d' "Ash Wednesday" se réjouissent d'être disjoints, libérés des conditions de l'existence commune :

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> We are glad to be scattered, we did little good to each other,
> Under a tree in the cool of the day, with the
> blessing of sand,
> Forgetting themselves and each other, united
> In the quiet of the desert.

L'unique échappatoire s'ouvre dans la mort et la rédemption transcendantale. La condition naturelle de l'homme est celle d' "un bateau à la dérive, avec lente voie d'eau."

> There is no end of it, the voiceless wailing,
> No end to the withering of withered flowers,
> To the movement of pain that is painless and motionless,
> To the drift of the sea and the drifting wreckage,
> The bone's prayer to Death its God. Only the hardly, barely prayable
> Prayer of the one Annunciation.
>
> *(The Dry Salvages)*

A travers l'œuvre entière d'Eliot, ironique ou désolée, résonne le refus qu'adresse le moi à une existence fatalement malheureuse; chez les parents comme chez les enfants du domaine terrestre de Wishwood, "There was no ecstasy."

La littérature issue du romantisme se reconnaît dans ces lignes prophétiques que Villiers de l'Isle-Adam fait dire à un des personnages d'*Axël*: "Nous avons détruit, dans nos étranges cœurs, l'amour de la vie—et c'est bien en réalité que nous sommes devenus nos âmes! Accepter désormais de vivre ne serait plus qu'un sacrilège envers nous-mêmes." Avant Villiers, c'est dans Chateaubriand, dans Vigny, dans Lamartine, que l'on trouve les premiers symptômes de la sécession avec le monde naturel, cette nostalgie d'un ordre qui ne serait "pas dans le contrat du temps, pas dans le schéma de la génération":

> Sur la terre d'exil pourquoi resté-je encore?
> Il n'est rien de commun entre la terre et moi.

L'homme moderne, jugeant l'univers invivable, loge à l'enseigne de l'Artiste de la Faim. Il renonce, mais par dépit, dans l'amertume, la désillusion, et non sans hautaine rancœur à l'égard de tout. Comme le *Faust* de Valéry, il ne se dépouille du monde que pour mieux se réserver à lui-même.

L'unique objet d'une telle ascèse, *c'est de fuir la condition terrestre.* Elle ignore cette délivrance intérieure dans laquelle l'homme et l'univers sanctifiés se réconcilient dans l'oubli de soi. Ne découvre-t-on pas là une inutile et onéreuse tromperie spirituelle? Il ne faut pas chercher ailleurs la cause de l'échec fondamental dont la noire auréole nimbe le poète moderne.

On peut se demander quelles circonstances psychologiques et sociales ont poussé un grand nombre d'écrivains modernes à commettre cette

fraude envers leur être. Plutôt que d'Œdipe, leur cas se rapproche de celui d'Oreste. Comme le fils innocent d'Agamemnon, ils se sentent responsables du crime perpétré contre un père à la fois craint et adoré. Ils éprouvent le besoin de l'expiation. De quel Osiris, de quel Adonis mort avec chaque printemps portent-ils infatigablement le deuil? Nerval, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, vivent dans la hantise d'un Eden originel dont ils furent chassés pour quelque crime obscur. Eliot, autant que ses devanciers, aspire à retourner "through the first gate / Into our first world . . ."

C'est pour retrouver l'issue du Paradis Perdu—perdu par notre faute à tous, dont le poète se fait le bouc émissaire—que le pèlerin engagé sur le chemin de l'expiation accepte de mettre entre parenthèses sa vie temporelle et de brûler des feux glacés du purgatoire. Oreste, matricide vengeur du père trahi par la sensualité incontrôlable de Clytemnestre, ne s'est jamais remis du crime initial qui décida, à son corps défendant, de sa funeste carrière de redresseur de torts et de quêteur maniaque du Paradis; pas plus qu'à Hamlet, il ne lui sera possible d'accepter le monde de la chair après ce qui s'est déroulé dans le palais souillé du roi. Il se fera en même temps victime et bourreau; il choisira la voie de la protestation et du refus. Se sentant à la fois vengeur et coupable, il sera la proie des Euménides intérieures dont il avait voulu devenir l'instrument.

Ces tendances profondes du psychisme humain nous permettent de mieux saisir peut-être l'attitude historique de Baudelaire, de Flaubert ou d'Eliot, leur traditionnalisme moral et politique si désuet en apparence. Ce sont des rebelles complices de l'ordre qu'ils défient, des révoltés plein de doute et de docilité. Avec quelle violence Flaubert, ennemi des bourgeois et des philistins, ne s'élève-t-il pas contre les Communards de 1870, qu'il traite d'assassins ou de brigands! Ce n'est pas là seulement la voix d'une classe sociale menacée qui se défend. Un élément passionnel, une note personnelle, se mêlent à ces vitupérations. Flaubert proteste trop pour avoir conscience nette. On dirait qu'il veut se laver ainsi de quelque ancien meurtre. Baudelaire, contempteur de la condition humaine toute entière, se soumet pourtant honteusement à la morale hypocrite du Second Empire, qu'il a percée à jour, et qu'il craint. Eliot, critique féroce d'un présent qui n'est que le legs de la chrétienté occidentale, se tourne avec nostalgie vers l'ordre social et religieux d'un passé lointain dont l'état de choses actuel constitue, quoi qu'on en pense, le fruit. Les héros de Kafka languissent et meurent sur les voies d'accès du Château défendu de la réalité. Le sacrifice inutile du présent aux mânes n'engendre nul avenir.

V

Comment donc faut-il vivre dans une époque de confusion telle que

la nôtre, en face d'un chaos où toutes les valeurs s'abolissent ou se nivellent jusqu'à n'être plus qu'une parodie de la vérité? Il est possible de rompre la carapace de gel qui nous écrase, à condition d'assumer de plein gré la rudesse et la rigueur de l'hiver spirituel où nous vivons exilés. Nous devons être prêts à lui abandonner notre propre trésor de chaleur et de vie, sans rien réserver pour nous-mêmes, sans nous en détourner jamais, en rejetant tout quant-à-soi. Après la première grande épreuve—l'abandon du pays des pères, le déracinement et l'aventure du désert—voilà ce qui fut demandé à Abraham au Mont Moriah: le sacrifice de l'enfant unique, l'offrande du plus vif de soi. Si le cœur n'est pas entier présent dans l'holocauste, le déni de ce monde signifie aussi peu de chose que l'attitude contraire, cet activisme faustien fait de frénésie et d'outrance inhumaines, que ressuscita Spengler au vingtième siècle. L'Artiste de la Faim de Kafka n'est que le revers de l'Artiste de la Grande Catastrophe, dont Hitler nous offrit le plus récent prototype.

Le Faust existentiel du jeune Goethe s'était jeté dans une série de conquêtes effrénées pour échapper à la terreur d'être, et non dans l'espoir d'être délivré de son angoisse par l'intercession de l'amour, seule source de la joie rédemptrice. La fuite dans l'action ne résout pas les tensions qui menacent de ruine l'édifice de la sensibilité.

Plus tard, les Fausts vieillis et pénitentiels de l'Agonie Romantique se sont enfoncés dans leur renoncement frigide. Ce n'était point pour redécouvrir l'étincelle salvatrice qu'emprisonne "Le dur lac oublié que hante sous le givre / Le transparent glacier des vols qui n'ont pas fui," mais afin de suspendre le cours d'une existence usée jusqu'à la trame et semée d'échecs. L'étonnante volte-face qui, après le milieu du siècle dernier, transforma un Faust byronien, assoiffé de voluptés et de puissance, en Saint-Antoine ou en Gérontion, n'a pas supprimé leur problème commun. Le crépuscule des dieux, chez Flaubert comme chez Eliot, se réduit au crépuscule des larves:

> This is the way the world ends,
> Not with a bang but a whimper.

Qu'il prétende agir, ou s'abstenir de l'action (et chaque fois ce sera par un mobile faux, adopté à contre-cœur), ce type humain demeurera irréconcilié avec l'être aussi bien qu'avec l'existence. Il est écartelé pour toujours entre les deux royaumes, et s'abreuvera de néant à la source de sa déchirure.

"Si boire t'est amer, deviens le vin toi-même": dangereuse transmutation, dans laquelle on risque de perdre l'identité chérie du moi. Narcisse jamais n'y saura consentir. Par notre propre volonté, nous devons faire l'esclave du monde hostile. L'amenant à travers l'hiver jusqu'à la saison des fruits, nous serons à notre tour sauvés par lui. Le

"vieil homme" romantique—René, Adolphe, Sade, Flaubert, Baudelaire, Eliot—ne sera jamais gagné entièrement à ce point de vue. Il réservera toujours quelque secret repli de soi. Quoique bourrelé de remords, tourmenté par la nostalgie de l'unité perdue, le don d'amour par quoi son cœur serait lui-même changé lui demeure étranger. Si, comme l'écrivit Valéry, "on ne sait jamais avec qui l'on couche," c'est parce qu'on refuse de s'abandonner à l'autre: car on ne peut connaître qu'en devenant l'objet de cette connaissance, en trahissant par la métamorphose notre visage séparé. Dans cette perspective cependant, l'ascèse *active*, le renoncement à soi implicite dans toute transformation, nous fraiera un chemin hors de la Terre Gaste solitaire de notre temps. Elle le transfigurerait (ne fût-ce que la durée d'un éclair) pendant le cours d'une vie terrestre.

Dans le schèma romantique, au contraire, la pénitence conclut alliance avec la déréliction. Elle monte un mécanisme démentiel destiné à perpétuer ici la Terre Gaste dont elle assure en même temps l'expiation—imposant sa punition pour le péché qu'elle engendre. Elle inaugure le compromis vicieux qu'entretient tout névrosé avec sa névrose, et l'incite à ménager la chèvre et le chou aux dépens de sa substance vive. La pénitence alors est une forme de suicide à retardement, une mort lente savamment dosée: celle-là même que se ménage Adolphe auprès d'Ellénore.

En vérité, cette folie du purgatoire qui sévit dans notre littérature depuis la fin du XVIII[e] siècle a partie liée avec le diable: elle fait semblant de l'exorciser, de le tenir en échec, mais ce n'est que pour mieux l'attirer au sein même des châtiments qu'elle inflige à la personnalité. Elle cultive ce qu'elle entend extirper. Tentation majeure pour l'esprit!

Aussi commettrions-nous une grave erreur psychologique en attachant un sens nominal, traditionnel, à cet étrange rituel de purification. C'est un masque d'humilité, qui cache une réalité différente, toute d'orgueil et d'amour-propre. Son objet principal est de voiler les mouvements véritables de la sensibilité. Renoncer au monde, ici, revient à sauvegarder notre plus secret désir, à nous attacher au plus vif de nous-mêmes.

Très tôt déjà dans l'histoire du romantisme, nous en voyons un exemple frappant dans *René*. Le couvent où s'enterre la sœur incestueuse du héros ne présente que les apparences du retour sur soi et de l'expiation, qu'exigent en l'occurence les conventions de la morale chrétienne. Il est la citadelle érigée par un monde injuste contre la toute-puissance de la passion d'Amélie. Quoique recluse derrière les murs du purgatoire monastique, son désir ne désarmera jamais: "Ah! si un même tombeau nous réunissait un jour! Mais non, je dois dormir seule sous les marbres glacés de ce sanctuaire où reposent pour jamais

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ces filles qui n'ont pas aimé . . . O mon frère, si je m'arrache à vous dans le temps, c'est pour n'être pas séparée de vous dans l'éternité!" Etrange conception du renoncement, qui nous fait penser aux engagements passionnés de Tristan et d'Yseult s'unissant à jamais dans "le merveilleux royaume de la nuit," plutôt qu'au dépouillement intérieur de la tradition mystique! Le recours ironique à "la fatalité," si fréquent dans l'œuvre de Flaubert, offre un autre exemple de ce mensonge métaphysique.

Un témoin perspicace et digne de foi m'assure que la forme de rapport la plus étroite que l'on puisse avoir, dans la conversation, avec T. S. Eliot consiste en une sorte de "blague" perpétuelle ("a constant kidding"), derrière laquelle le sentiment vrai du poète se retrancherait. Nous sommes loin de cette ouverture du cœur, de ce libre flot des sentiments naissants en présence de notre prochain, dont la morale évangélique prône la vertu. Cette attitude sociale hérissée participe de l'esprit de rétraction douloureuse, de défense pleine de soupçons, et de fuite oblique devant l' "Autre" qui nous frappe souvent à la lecture de son œuvre. Il manque à Eliot une certaine générosité, une confiance élémentaires à l'égard des hommes:

> They make noises, and think they are talking to each other;
> They make faces, and think they understand each other.
> And I'm sure they don't . . .
> Two people who know they do not know each other,
> Breeding children whom they do not understand
> And who will never understand them . . .
> Then one *is* alone, and if one is alone
> Then lover and beloved are equally unreal
> And the dreamer is no more real than his dream—
> *(The Cocktail Party)*

L'ironie d'Eliot, comme celle dont parle Constant dans les premières pages d'*Adolphe*, est un succédané tyrannique, jouant à la place des contacts authentiques, écartés d'emblée du domaine des possibilités. Elle implique une négation radicale des relations humaines qui fait écho à l'amer "Personne ne comprend personne" de Flaubert vieillissant. Comme Kafka dans ses *Journaux*, Eliot semble s'être souvenu de cette parole désenchantée dans *The Confidential Clerk*: là encore, elle revient comme un leitmotiv obstiné. "Beaucoup d'amis, beaucoup de gants," écrit Baudelaire.

VI

Il est vrai que notre génération grandit dans le désert. Osera-t-elle affronter, elle aussi, la seconde épreuve d'Abraham, se risquer en holocauste sur le bûcher de l'avenir, comme le patriarche qui lia son fils unique aux cornes de l'autel? L'autre alternative est connue. Mais les

rites pénitentiels du purgatoire romantique, dès qu'on en saisit la nature, se révèlent aussi impuissants à changer les dunes stériles de nos années en vergers chargés de fruits, qu'à nous délivrer de nous-mêmes: c'est justement parce qu'ils échouent à *nous* transformer que notre expérience de l'univers est négative et décevante. Tout au plus nous enseignent-ils à temporiser jusqu'à la mort dans une atmosphère de sécheresse insupportable, que nous présentent les écrits de Kafka ou les dernières pièces d'Eliot. Nul homme ne saurait se payer le luxe de ce fatal compromis, car, si l'on peut envisager de fuir la misère de la condition commune en se repliant, dans un acte de faux "renoncement," sur sa propre pauvreté, il n'existe aucun remplacement pour notre existence elle-même: chaque instant de la vie terrestre est irréparable, de quelque façon qu'on l'éprouve. C'est le désert, ou Canaan: "Denn ein drittes Land gibt es nicht für die Menschen," constate Kafka, en post-scriptum à sa propre expérience.

Il nous faut cultiver en nous-mêmes une sensibilité nouvelle qui, en s'affermissant, en embrassant toutes les créatures offertes à nos regards, nous débarrassera de l'impasse d'un purgatoire-à-vie, consacré à ses propres fins. Répudiant les équivoques de l'éternel persiflage, les excuses larmoyantes qui protègent et perpétuent notre solitude, nous devons enfin apprendre à nous rouvrir au monde.

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DANTE'S "ALLEGORY OF POETS" AND THE MEDIAEVAL THEORY OF POETIC FICTION

RICHARD HAMILTON GREEN

IN recent years, Dante scholars and critics have shown fruitful interest in Dante's conception of the art of poetry. They have found in his theory and in his own practice a mode of figurative expression which demands and rewards interpretation based on the conventions and traditions of the poet's own period. What may once have seemed a limiting approach to this mediaeval poetry is now seen to be an indispensable one, if the reader wishes to possess as much as he can of what Dante, in the full and conscious control of his learning and art, intended to give.

Because Dante is a mediaeval poet, and writes about poetry in the vocabulary of his age, the terms *allegoria* and *allegorica interpretatio* must be accepted, however complex their history in the Middle Ages and however confused and disparaging the term "allegory" has become in modern criticism. It is precisely because the mediaeval idea of allegorical interpretation has such a complex history, and was extended to such varied aspects of human experience, that its application now to works of mediaeval art and poetry involves the constant risk of oversimplification and confusion. Some of the best recent criticism of Dante's poetry raises questions about his allegorical method, and about figural representation in mediaeval poetry generally, which call for further study. I hope that one who is not a Dante scholar, but a student of the Latin Middle Ages and its theory of poetry, may without presumption speak usefully of Dante's terms as they apply to his and other poetry of that period.

In a well-known passage in the *Convivio*, Dante distinguishes between the allegory of poets and the allegory of theologians. This discussion of allegory, and the more elaborate treatment of it in his letter to Can Grande, have led to the opinion that, although in the *Convivio* Dante describes and uses the allegory of poets, in the *Divine Comedy* he changes to the allegory of theologians and demands for that work the kind of interpretation appropriate to the Sacred Scriptures.[1] In my opinion, such a conclusion—or, rather, the use of these terms in this way—is not justified by Dante's own statements or by the mediaeval conception of the subtle analogies between various modes of revelation,

[1] Charles S. Singleton, "Dante's Allegory," *Speculum*, XXV (1950), 78-83; see also his article, "The Other Journey," *Kenyon Review*, XIV (1952), 189-206. These essays are reprinted, with three others, in Professor Singleton's *Dante Studies I* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954). See also Francis Fergusson, *Dante's Drama of the Mind* (Princeton, 1953), pp. 103-104, 126-128, 227.

both human and divine, and their appropriate interpretations. Moreover, the impulse to praise Dante's great work as Scriptural rather than poetic allegory not only does violence to the mediaeval theory of poetic fiction, but explicitly and by implication underrates the intent and the achievement of much other mediaeval poetry.

Those who hold that the *Divine Comedy* ought to be regarded as the allegory of theologians say that its first, or literal, sense is to be taken not as a fiction but as true, and historically true, as the first sense of Scripture was understood to be true[2] or, more cautiously, that Dante models his allegory on the allegory of Scripture, that the persons and events of his journey are given in an historical sense as the persons and events are given in Scripture. The problem here centers on the term "fiction"; it is avoided or questioned because it seems not to convey the reality and truth which inform the exemplary figures of the *Comedy*. Or, if the literal sense is acknowledged to be a fiction, it is described as an embodied fiction whose figures are associated with the figurative mode of Scripture because so many of them are given as real, concrete, historical. It is true that for many modern readers the term "poetic fiction" does not bear the weight it did in the Middle Ages; the discovery of truth in a sacramental world, in a divinely inspired book, and in their fictional re-creation is not easily shared in our time. And clearly there is much to be gained from calling attention to the Biblical quality of Dante's purpose and method.

But our concern is with Dante's understanding of the art of poetry and his expectations for his own work; and these prerequisites to criti-

[2] Singleton, "Dante's Allegory," pp. 80-82. Professor Fergusson does not go so far. Although he believes that Dante changes his figurative method from the "allegory of poets" in the *Convivio* to the "allegory of theologians" in the *Comedy*, Fergusson nevertheless insists on the fictional nature of the literal level of the latter work. See pp. 3, 9-10, 22, etc. The pioneering study of the relations between Dante's poetic method and Scriptural allegory is Erich Auerbach's monograph, "Figura," *Archivum Romanicum*, XXII (1938), 436-489, in which some of the history of Scriptural interpretation is traced, with special emphasis on the term *figura*. The justness of Professor Auerbach's central thesis and its value to later criticism are, I think, beyond question; but his handling of the term *allegoria* tends, in my opinion, to obscure its significance in criticism and exegesis, especially during the later Middle Ages. It is true that, in modern critical usage, "allegory" has become so impoverished a term as to be nearly unusable, but this should not blind us to the wide currency and profound implications of *allegoria* as it was understood in the Middle Ages. The adaptation of traditional mediaeval terminology to the exigencies of modern criticism is fraught with difficulties. In the related field of patristic exegesis, Henri de Lubac has criticized Jean Daniélou on similar grounds; he praises the basis of Daniélou's distinction between "typology," as a specifically Christian practice, and "allegory," as an outdated and non-Christian cultural fact, but he deplores the terminology as being neither Scriptural nor traditional and therefore as historically confusing. Henri de Lubac, "'Typologie' et 'allégorisme,'" *Recherches de science religieuse*, XXXIV (1947), 180-206; and Walter J. Burghhardt, "On Early Christian Exegesis," *Theological Studies*, XI (1950), 78-116.

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cism are accessible in his terms taken as they work in his own poetic tradition. The vitality of the views outlined above, and the importance to Dante criticism of the studies which propose them, are, I hope, apparent even in this simplified résumé. But troublesome questions are involved; I shall attempt to answer some of them, partly to clarify and complement these studies, and partly to save other mediaeval poetry from the cheapening to which it is subjected by these scholars' view of the "allegory of poets."

In what way did Dante mean his journey to be taken as real and historical, and not as fictive? Did the "beautiful lie" of the poet exclude truth, or diminish it; or did it at the same time conceal and reveal it? What did he and his contemporaries mean by *poetica fizione*, or, as Dante puts it in *De vulgari eloquentia*, by "fictio rhetorica in musica posita"? And however true and useful it is to say that Dante's allegory in the *Comedy* is modeled on Scriptural allegory, should we therefore say that the *Comedy* is written according to the "allegory of theologians" as opposed to the "allegory of poets" as the distinction is made in the *Convivio*? The importance of these questions is increased when we find that acceptance of the *Divine Comedy* as Scriptural allegory leads to the disparagement of the poetic allegory found in the odes of the *Convivio* and in much other mediaeval poetry where the persons of the narrative achieve poetic life of a more obviously typical kind. Allegory of poets is reduced to a "disembodied fiction." The implication is plain that such poetry is unpoetically rational—even that it is somehow unchristian—and that Dante abandoned the *Convivio* and its allegory because such poetry was improper for a poet of rectitude.[3]

The *Divine Comedy* is unquestionably greater poetry, and much more to our taste, than the odes of the *Convivio*, than the philosophical dream visions of Dante's earlier mediaeval models. But this does not mean that its mode of figurative representation was regarded as essentially different from—or truer, or more real, or more virtuous than—a more conventionally rhetorical kind of poetry. The *Convivio*, we should remember, was given by Dante as a banquet of Wisdom. The difference, I suggest, is a qualitative one within the wide limits of poetic fiction and its variety of figural possibilities all devoted to veiling and revealing truth.

[3] Professor Singleton suggests that "Dante abandoned the *Convivio* because he came to see that a poet could not be a poet of rectitude and work with an allegory whose first meaning was a disembodied fiction" ("Dante's Allegory," p. 82). Professor Fergusson interprets Dante's "allegory of poets" as a mode of expression "merely illustrative of the concepts of moral philosophy" (p. 100) and remarks that it is "the kind of abstract, or neo-platonizing, or pagan-literary allegory which Dante called the 'allegory of poets' and gave up as inadequate when he abandoned the *Convivio*" (p. 128). In this connection, see also Erich Auerbach, "Typological Symbolism in Mediaeval Literature," *Yale French Studies*, No. 9 (1952), pp. 5-8; and, for a more extended treatment, *Typologische Motive in der mittelalterlichen Literatur* (Krefeld, 1953).

In order to find what Dante meant by allegory as poets use it, let us look briefly at the texts from which our discussion arises. Dante writes in the *Convivio*:

> I say that, as I put it in the first chapter, this exposition [of my poetry] should be both literal and allegorical. And to understand this it should be known that writings may be taken and should be explained chiefly in four senses. The first is called the literal, and is the one which goes no further than the text of the fictional story, such as we find in the fables of the poets. The second is called the allegorical, and it is the sense which is hidden under the veil of the fable—it is truth hidden beneath a beautiful lie [*sotto bella menzogna*]; as when Ovid says that Orpheus tamed wild beasts with his lyre and made the trees and rocks come to him, he means to say that the wise man makes cruel hearts tender and humble with the instrument of his voice... It is true that the theologians take this sense otherwise than do the poets; but, since my intention is to follow the method of the poets, I take the allegorical sense according to the use of poets [*Conv.*, II, i].[4]

Dante then goes on to discuss the third and fourth senses, the moral and anagogical, in which the fictions of the *Convivio* may be interpreted. The allegory of theologians is mentioned only in passing, as representative of a relation between literal and figurative meanings which differs from the relation between poetic fiction and truth. Dante is simply remarking on the ways of understanding a piece of writing; and, since the use and interpretation of poetic allegory is analogous to, and derives its terminology from, the allegory of Scripture, he calls attention to the most obvious difference. Poets deal with truth hidden beneath and revealed through a veil of fiction; theologians, however, take this allegorical sense in a different way. That is all he says. James E. Shaw has reasonably suggested that Dante makes the distinction here because he was aware of St. Thomas' effort to restrict the term *allegoria* to the mode of Sacred Scripture, and to exclude it from application to other writing.[5] We may also recall those theologians of Dante's own time against whom Boccaccio and his friends defended the rights of poetry.

In any case, there is no disagreement that Dante here means by "allegory of theologians" the traditional, formal method of interpreting the Sacred Scriptures. The force of the distinction, then, is to affirm that in the *Convivio* Dante is using the terms *allegoria* and *allegorica interpretatio* in the older and wider sense in which they were applied to poetry as well as Scripture. We should note, moreover, that,

[4] I translate from the edition of Busnelli and Vandelli, *Opere di Dante*, IV (Florence, 1934), 96-99.

[5] *The Lady "Philosophy" in the Convivio* (Cambridge, Mass., 1938), p. 9. Professor Shaw's explanation of Dante's distinction, his discussion of the allegorical mode of the *Convivio*, and his insistence on the truth which informs and is conveyed by Dante's fiction deserve careful consideration in the study of Dante's allegory. It may be noted in passing that St. Thomas was no more successful in limiting the use of the term *allegoria* by reserving it to Scriptural allegory than modern writers on mediaeval art and literature have been in identifying it with what they take to be the abstract moralization of the *Psychomachia* tradition.

in Dante's explanation of the moral and anagogical senses which may sometimes be found in the allegory of poets, he uses examples from Scripture. Indeed, his illustration of anagogy in the *Convivio*, where he is admittedly describing the allegory of poets, is the same (the reference to Exodus in Psalm 113) as his illustration of the four senses in the letter to Can Grande where he describes the allegory of the *Comedy*.[6] This fact would seem to rule out the notion that the Scriptural example in the letter indicates that Dante is there describing the "allegory of theologians" and excluding the "allegory of poets." It is my opinion that in both cases Dante is illustrating the discovery of figurative meanings in poetry in a way which would be easily understood by contemporaries aware of the subtle analogies and radical differences between poetic fiction and divine revelation.

But the letter to Can Grande, which does not mention a distinction between poetic and Biblical allegory, provides its own evidence that Dante is there demanding for the *Comedy* interpretation proper to the allegory of poets. He describes the form, or method, by which he treats his twofold subject in the poem, and his description belongs to the rhetorical tradition of the conventional *accessus ad auctores*, rather than to the tradition of Scriptural exegesis. "The form or manner of treatment," he writes, "is poetic, fictive, descriptive, digressive, and figurative; and at the same time it consists in definition, division, proof, refutation, and the use of examples." The *forma tractandi* is thus both poetic and philosophical; its purpose is to please and instruct.[7] The key word, I think, is "fictive"—and this is precisely the quality which distinguishes poetic revelation from divine.

Dante's early commentators, in their own *accessus* to the *Divine Comedy*, show clearly that they take it to be, among many things and as a necessary starting point, a poetic fiction to be understood as the allegories of poets are understood. Benvenuto da Imola declares that, in his commentary on the *Commedia*, he will "unravel the web of its fictions, elucidate the mysteries veiled by its various figures, find out the meanings hidden in its multiple senses."[8] The very words *figmenta, integumenta figmentorum*, belong to the tradition of poetic allegory and not to that of Scriptural commentary. When Dante, in Canto VIII of the *Purgatorio*, addresses his reader, "Sharpen your eyes to the truth here, Reader, for the veil is now indeed so thin that you may easily pass within it," Benvenuto comments that here the poet is about to

[6] Cf. *Convivio*, II, i, 6, and *Epistola*, XIII, 20-22. See also the comments of Busnelli and Vandelli on this place in the *Convivio*, in which they call attention to Dante's poetic use of *In exitu Israel* in *Purg.*, II.

[7] See Ernst R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York, 1953), pp. 221-225.

[8] Benevenuti de Rambaldis de Imola, *Commentum super Dantis Aldigherii Comoediam*, ed. J. P. Lacaita (Florence, 1887), I, 5.

construct a noble fiction, and turns first to his reader to make him attentive to the truth beneath the literal sense, to the *sententia* hidden beneath the integument of the fiction.[9] And in Canto IX, when Dante again calls the reader's attention to his art, Benvenuto remarks: "Because the poet has already made beautiful and artful fictions, and is about to make new *fictiones magis artificiosae et sententiosae*, he demands the reader's attention."[10] But it should be noted that, if Benvenuto takes Dante as a poet, and the *Commedia* as the allegory of a poet, he also makes the point that Dante is *poeta Christianissimus* who proposes to return poetry to theology and found common bonds between the two.[11]

To insist that the literal sense of the *Divine Comedy* is a poet's fiction and that its mode of allegorical representation is that of the *poeta Christianus* is not to deny that the unique excellence of the poem is to be found—as Auerbach, Singleton, Fergusson, and others have shown—in the similarity of its figurative method to the allegory of Scripture. Dante's *alta fantasia*—the journey there, the description of souls in their life after death—are wonderfully real and immediate; and the truth of that vision *is* rooted in the truth of theology, its figures are fraught with the truths of divine revelation. The pilgrim's journey to Hell achieves some of its poetic ends because Aeneas had made the journey earlier, and the mediaeval reader knew that such fictive journeys represented the *descensus ad inferos moralis et virtuosus* which every man should make in order to assess the values of this world and the next; but that journey gained other ends because Dante made it begin on Good Friday, and because Christ too had descended into Hell. Yet, for all its Biblical evocation and its Christian doctrine, the work remains an act of the poetic imagination, and its *modus tractandi* is the allegory of poets, though not, it is true, in precisely the same way that

[9] *Ibid.*, III, 221-222. For some recent comments on the significance of Dante's personal warnings to the reader in the text of the *Comedy*, see Francis Fergusson, *op. cit.*, p. 26; Erich Auerbach, "Dante's Addresses to the Reader," *Romance Philology*, VII (1954), 268-278; and Leo Spitzer, "The Addresses to the Reader in the Commedia," *Italica*, XXXII (1955), 143-165. Professor Auerbach's article shows both the virtues and the dangers of the recent emphasis on the Scriptural quality of Dante's imagery. When he speaks of the *Divine Comedy* as a poetic fiction, but "a fiction so fused with reality that one easily forgets where its realm begins," and this precisely because of its similarity to divine revelation based on historical events, we are given a new and valuable access to Dante's poem; but, when we are told that Dante "maintains the attitude of a man who, by special grace, after Aeneas and Paul, has been admitted to see the other world, and has been entrusted with a mission as important as theirs," we feel that Dante would himself have distinguished sharply between these missions, these kinds of vision, and these revelations.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 263.

[11] "Hic autem christianissimus poeta Dantes poetriam ad theologiam studuit revocare, quae tamen de se magnam convenientiam habet cum illa: potest namque theologia dici quaedam poetria de Deo; nam testante Philosopho poetae fuerunt primi theologizantes de Deo." *Ibid.*, I, 9-10. I shall return presently to the senses in which Dante and other poets, pagan and Christian, were called theologians.

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the mode of the *Convivio* is the allegory of poets. The uniqueness of Dante's achievement in the *Divine Comedy* is beyond question; but it is the achievement which is unique, not the method as Dante and other mediaeval writers speak of allegorical method.

There is in mediaeval poetic theory a larger view of the allegory of poets which includes the modes of expression of the *Convivio* and the *Commedia*, the visions of Boethius, Bernard Silvestris, and Alanus, the Old English *Dream of the Rood*, the fourteenth-century English *Pearl* and *Piers Plowman*, the extraordinary vision poems of Chaucer. These poems differ widely in time, language, rhetoric, and literary tradition; some are more obviously Scriptural than others in the immediate reference of their main figures, some appeal more to the twentieth-century reader than others. But all, I suggest, are the conscious fictions of poets who would recognize in each other's work the same essential mode of allegorical representation, the same basic integrity and orthodoxy of moral purpose, along with an astonishing variety of technique and attitude and emphasis.

Francis Fergusson calls our attention to a distinction which must be borne in mind, not only by readers of the *Comedy*, but by readers of other mediaeval poetry. "He writes in the first person; and yet the distinction between Dante speaking as the author, and Dante the pilgrim, is fundamental to the whole structure. The author when he reminds us of his existence, is outside the fictive world of the poem; the Pilgrim is the protagonist of the drama, the center of each scene. The author knows the whole story in advance, the Pilgrim meets everything freshly for the first time."[12]

The convention by which the mediaeval poet makes of himself the dreamer and narrator of a fictional vision, and the variety and subtlety of poetic effects which this practice made possible, need more study than they have so far received. A comparative study of this common practice would reveal, among other things, that Dante's fictional method, his serious moral purpose, his graceful exploitation of Scriptural and classical traditions, are not unusual as allegorical method, however unusual the quality of his performance is found to be.

The problem of the relations between poetry and Sacred Scripture in their authority and efficacy, in their subject matter, and in their modes of expression, has a long history in the Middle Ages. I propose now to review some of this history and to examine the most important similarities and differences between these two kinds of figurative revelation. We should note at the outset that, when the mediaeval critic and commentator speaks of poetry, he usually means the classical poetry of the ancient *auctores*, though he sometimes speaks of the Christian poetry of mediaeval poets, and sometimes—as in the case of Dante—of

[12] *Dante's Drama of the Mind*, pp. 9-10.

his own work. There are important similarities between these kinds of poetry, but there are also radical differences. And both were distinguished from the Sacred Scriptures. Poetry, whether pagan or Christian, reveals truth beneath the veil of fiction; Scripture reveals truth beneath the veil of truth, though the writers of Scripture sometimes used the locutions of poetry in the literal level of their inspired historical discourse. But Christian poetry shares the truth of Scripture, though it employs the fictions of pagan poetry. Our inquiry into the analogies and distinctions between the allegory of poets, both Christian and pagan, and the allegory of Scripture must take into account these important distinctions.

The allegory of Sacred Scripture, the "allegory of theologians" as Dante puts it, is defined by the nature and purpose of the revelation which it embodies. Hugh of St. Victor observed that divine truth was revealed to men twice: first in the works of creation, which manifested their maker by various kinds of similitude; and second, when the minds of men were darkened, in the works of redemption, in the person of the incarnate Word of God and His sacraments.[13] The Sacred Scriptures contained both the prefiguration of this revelation and its fulfillment. The text of Scripture was therefore regarded as literally and historically true, since it was the record of man's redemption, and as spiritually true, because the persons, things, and events recorded there were themselves figures of the divine truth which the book revealed. God Himself was the author, to be sought and found in His work, just as He was said to be the author of the universe, to be found in the true reading of that cosmic book. The sacred quality of Scriptural allegory and the divinity of its author must be stressed, because assent to these premises inevitably controlled the way a mediaeval writer could speak of other books and their makers, other figurative manifestations of what was finally the same truth but revealed within the limits of human creativity.

For the mediaeval reader, classical poetry had this in common with Sacred Scripture: it too sought to reveal its maker's vision of truth. But the maker of this poetry was not divine, and his vision of the *invisibilia Dei* was limited to the mirror of created things. The ancient poet had to clothe them in the visible fictions of his imagination since he could not, as the divine author of the world of nature and the book of Scripture had done, clothe them in the visible *things* of nature itself and its history. Nevertheless, the subject of serious classical poetry is truth, however limited the poet's grasp of truth may have been, and truth is one. Therefore, as Dante's contemporaries who wrote on the

[13] For a brief and authoritative exposition of this basic mediaeval doctrine, see Hugh's *De sacramentis*, I, iii, *PL*, CLXXVI, 217C; and his commentary, *In hierarchiam coelestem*, I, i, *PL*, CLXXV, 926B.

subject remark, pagan poetry is a kind of theology and the poets may be called theologians.[14]

This view of the office of the poet had, of course, very early origins. The pagan commentator Macrobius, writing in the fourth century, asserted that the wise man and lover of truth used fables as the appropriate representation of doctrine rooted in truth: "haec ipsa veritas per quaedam composita et ficta profertur."[15] This passage in his commentary on Cicero's *Dream of Scipio* provided the authority and vocabulary for nearly all later mediaeval discussions of poetry. In it, Macrobius describes the fictions of the poets as representations of truth "sub figmentorum velamine," beneath the veil of imagined things. He attributed to Virgil "the twofold gift of poetic imagination and philosophical truth," and spoke of Homer as "the fount and origin of all divine invention" who taught truth to the wise beneath the "cover of fiction" and through "fabulous images."[16] We find these ideas and terms echoed throughout the Middle Ages: in Bernardus Silvestris, Alan of Lille, John of Salisbury in the twelfth century; in Dante, Boccaccio, Mussato, Petrarch, Coluccio Salutati in the age and place with which our present inquiry is mainly concerned.[17]

Christian poetry, as the mediaeval poets and writers on the art and history of poetry conceived it, belonged to the classical tradition inasmuch as it was a human art, but to religion since it expressed the truth of Sacred Scripture. Its allegory was poetic because its literal presenta-

[14] Boccaccio, *Vita di Dante*, xxi-xxii, ed. D. Guerri (Bari, 1918), pp. 36-43, and, in the same volume, *Comento alla "Divina Commedia,"* I, lez. iii, pp. 141-145; *Genealogia deorum gentilium*, XV, viii, ed. V. Romano (Bari, 1951), pp. 767-769; Petrarch, *Le Familiari*, X, iv, ed. V. Rossi (Florence, 1933), II, 301-310, and *Invective contra medicum*, III, ed. P. G. Ricci (Rome, 1950), p. 71; Coluccio Salutati, *Epistolario*, XII, iii, ed. F. Novati (Rome, 1896), III, 452-456, and *De laboribus Herculis*, I, i, ed. B. L. Ullman (Zurich, 1951), I, 3-9. The mediaeval authorities on this subject were St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, VI, v-viii, and especially XVIII, xiv, and St. Isidore of Seville, *Etym.*, VIII, vii. As Boccaccio puts it, in the chapter of his *Genealogia* cited above, the pagan poets treated natural and moral theology "eo quod sub fictionibus suis naturalia contegunt atque moralia." Most of the texts cited above deal explicitly with the relations between the allegory of poets, both classical and mediaeval, and the allegory of Scripture. Where the claims for poetry seem excessive, the reader should bear in mind the constant possibility of polemical overstatement by literary men defending the virtue of poetry against its scholastic detractors.

[15] *Comm. in Somnium Scipionis*, ed. F. Eyssenhardt (Leipzig, 1893), I, ii, 7-11, pp. 480-481.

[16] *Ibid.*, I, ix, 8, p. 552; and II, x, 11, p. 618.

[17] In addition to the texts cited in note 14 above, see Boccaccio, *Geneal.*, XIV, vii, pp. 699-701; Salutati, *Epist.*, X, vi (III, 225-231), XII, vii (III, 494), and XIV, xxiv (IV, 230-240); and *De laboribus Herculis*, I, ii, pp. 10-16, and prima editio, p. 587. For a more extended account of poetic theory in the twelfth century and earlier, see my article, "Alan of Lille's *De planctu Naturae*," *Speculum*, XXXI (1956), 649-674; and D. W. Robertson, Jr., "Some Mediaeval Literary Terminology," *SP*, XLVIII (1951), 669-692. I should like here to acknowledge Professor Robertson's generous help in the preparation of this paper.

tion was a fiction of the poet's imagination. But beneath the veil of its fiction was revealed the truth which had been revealed in Scripture and allegorically received by the poet. The capital difference between the allegory of the Christian poet and the allegory of Scripture was not, then, in the truth expressed, nor in the fact of figural expression; the difference lay in the mode of allegory. Characteristically, the mediaeval poet revealed his vision of truth in a fiction, and for this he claimed not only the *auctores* of his art—as Dante claimed Virgil as master and author—but the precedent of Scripture itself which sometimes in its literal expression employed the locutions proper to poetry.

Boccaccio, in his defense of poetry against its literal-minded detractors, cites St. Jerome's opinion that some of the writers of Scripture, guided by the Holy Ghost, used poetic style.[18] And he reinforces his argument in a passage which shows plainly the relations between ancient and mediaeval poetry:

> There have been, and still are, many of our own Christian poets, who, beneath the covering of their fictions [sub tegminibus fictionum suarum], have set forth the sacred truths of the Christian religion. And, to choose one example among many, our Dante, in the book which he calls the Comedy, written in his mother-tongue but most artfully, admirably set forth the triple state of the dead according to the doctrine of Sacred Theology.[19]

And in a later chapter of the *Genealogia Deorum* Boccaccio returns to the example of Dante as a Christian poet using poetic allegory to express the truths of Scripture: "In his Comedy, written with admirable art, Dante shows himself to be, not a maker of myths, but rather a Catholic and divine theologian."[20]

Boccaccio's praise here might seem to suggest that Dante's great fiction was indeed understood to be an "allegory of theologians," and in a profound and important sense this is surely true. But not in the sense of Dante's distinction in the *Convivio*. For, in the sense that Dante is a "divine theologian," the odes of the *Convivio* are also the allegories of a theologian, since they too are the fictional representation of truth rooted in the truth of religion. Boccaccio makes it clear that Dante is only one among many mediaeval poets who use poetic allegory to represent the truth of Sacred Scripture.[21] The others he mentions

[18] *Geneal.*, XIV, xxii, p. 748. The main authorities for the late mediaeval insistence on the poetic quality of Scripture were St. Jerome, in the prefatory letter to Book 2 of his translation of Eusebius' *Chronicon*, and St. Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, III, xxix, 40. For further bibliographical data on this subject see Charles G. Osgood's notes in his excellent translation of the last two books of the *Genealogia, Boccaccio on Poetry* (Princeton, 1930), now available in an inexpensive reprint recently published by the Liberal Arts Press.

[19] *Ibid.* See also *Geneal.*, XV, viii, pp. 768-769, and *Comm. alla Div. Commedia*, pp. 142-143; Salutati, *Epist.*, IX, vii (III, 67).

[20] *Geneal.*, XV, vi, pp. 760-761.

[21] "Et illustris atque novissimus poeta Franciscus Petrarca in suis Buccolicis sub velamine pastoralis eloquii veri Dei et inclite Trinitatis laudes irasque eius in

in this passage show clearly the allegorical tradition in which he places the *Divine Comedy*: Petrarch, who in his bucolics reveals the attitude of the true God toward men beneath the veil of pastoral conventions; Prudentius, whose allegory modern critics find so uncongenial, and Sedulius, Arator, and Juvencus. These are Christian poets, theologians because they are poets, sacred theologians because their fictions reveal sacred truth. In the sense that Dante employs allegory in the *Comedy* as a theologian, so do they in their poetry, and so does he in that other poetry which he wrote in the conventions they established.

But this is not the "allegory of theologians" which Dante mentions in the *Convivio*. It is the "allegory of Christian poets," making fictions which veil the truth according to the ancient art of poets whom they loved and admired, but revealing in their poetry an aspect of the truth in which they believed. We recognize in the figurative quality of the *Divine Comedy* a technique which makes Dante's vision of the journey *seem* more real, more immediate and demanding than the vision of the "donna gentile" of the *Convivio*. This technique uses *apparent* facts, the fact that Dante makes the journey as a figure moving in the poem, that he meets and talks to persons he knew in life. But this illusion of historical reality is his fiction—and his fiction bears its weight of truth that is not illusory precisely because, in this special way, it seems to be true.

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calcantes ignavia Petri naviculam mira descriptione notavit. Stant volumina et intelligere volentibus sensus apparent. Hos ultra vigent Prudentii atque Sedulii carmina sacram sub tegumento expromentia veritatem. Et Arator, non solum Christianus homo, sed romane ecclesie sacerdos et cardo, heroyco carmine apostolorum gesta more cantando poetico designavit. Iuvencus insuper, Hyspanus homo, sed eque Christianus, sub velamento hominis, bovis, aquile et leonis Christi, filii Dei vivi, Redemptoris nostri, actus omnes etiam fingendo composuit." *Geneal.*, XIV, xxii, p. 748.

THE IRREDUCIBLE DOVE

CHARLES S. SINGLETON

UPON reading Mr. Green's concluding words, on the preceding page, it is to me a wonder that there can have seemed to him to be enough disagreement between us to occasion his writing as he does. He tells us that in the *Comedy* "the illusion of historical reality is Dante's fiction," whereas I had myself written that "the fiction of the *Comedy* is that it is not fiction." But it is as if I had not made that (I had thought) unambiguous statement or supported it with a whole chapter of argument respecting the "make-believe" of the poem.[1]

It has somehow seemed to Mr. Green that he has reason still to dispute with me on just this score. In fact, one must note that, if he is concerned to stress any one point respecting Dante's allegory in the *Comedy*, it is this: Dante's journey through the realms of the afterlife is a fiction, is a fiction. It did not really take place. Dante invented this thing. And Dante, as Mr. Green would remind us, said as much to Can Grande when he wrote that the form or manner of his poem was poetic and fictive.

I can only gather that Mr. Green is here revealing a sense of something amounting to alarm that I, and perhaps all who have appeared to agree with me so far in the matter of Dante's allegory, are in danger of succumbing so completely to the illusion of reality in Dante's poem as to forget that it is illusion—which rather suggests the picture of a whole group of mediaevalist Don Quixotes, I suppose, and is at least worth something as comedy. But such men would be dangerous, too, hoodwinked, and what is worse, hoodwinking others, and, if their number should continue to grow, who knows what could happen!

To come into the clear on this particular point of concern (Mr. Green is not the first to show signs of it), let us think for a moment of some other work of fiction in which the illusion of reality is so powerful that the reader, *while in the act of reading*, may be said to fall quite under the spell of that fiction. Perhaps *War and Peace* may serve as well, or better, than another as example. Part of the novel is truly historical, of course, but we speak now of the whole illusion of a reality which Tolstoy had the undoubted power to produce. Thus all will agree, I suppose, that, while we give ourselves over to his account of events, we read them as real. And then when we put down the book, for one reason or another, it is to be assumed (and certainly hoped) that the

[1] My *Dante Studies*, cited by Mr. Green, pp. 62 ff. and the last chapter on the poem as *myth*.

spell is broken, and, insofar as we reflect on it, we would then think of the work as a great fiction. And, if Tolstoy had written for his novel some introduction comparable to Dante's letter to Can Grande, it would not have surprised us if he himself had spoken of his manner as being, among other things, "fictive."

Tolstoy's novel and Dante's *Comedy*, thus, have at least this in common—the power of producing the illusion of reality. While we read each of these works with full sympathy, or empathy, giving ourselves over to them in the act, we assent to the events narrated as being real. But Mr. Green will agree, I take it, that we do not read other works in this way: a fable of Aesop, say, or a parable told by Christ, or *Pilgrim's Progress*, or a *canzone* of the *Convivio*. But Mr. Green will say, of course, that this is simply a matter of a difference in quality. Some works produce the sense of reality, some do not. This, to be sure, is an easy and simple way to settle the matter. But can it be so easily settled in our minds?

If *War and Peace* and the *Divine Comedy* have the power of an "illusion of reality" in common, they reveal to all readers a very great difference in another respect, in the matter of allegory. While we are under Tolstoy's illusion of reality we get no "other meaning"; while we are under Dante's, we do. In one case vision is single, in the other it is double. And here precisely is the problem, as I trust Mr. Green will agree: How is it that we read the *Comedy* with essentially the same sense of reality as we get in reading *War and Peace* and yet get also, in the poem, as an inseparable part of its illusion, the double vision which is allegory as Dante constructed it?

This is both the problem (if we choose to make it that) and the most important thing about our reading of the poem—the fact of the double vision in Dante, with the first sense or illusion being that of real event.[2]

[2] It will not do to demand the "illusion of reality" from the reading of the prologue scene of the poem, Cantos I and II of the *Inferno*. Dante is there concerned to establish precisely the terms or condition of his "other" sense, to which he can then recall the reader as the latter moves along the line of the literal journey beyond. But this I have already said in a chapter on the allegory. I might add that I consider the addresses to the reader which come along that line (such as the "Aguzza qui, lettor, ben li occhi al vero . . . ," etc., which for Mr. Green would be the clearest evidence of the allegory of poets) to be deliberate *recalls* to the prologue scene and the "other" journey which is there staged. On one point I cannot see how there can be any debate; Dante will never (*within* the poem) speak out in such a way as to undermine the "reality" of the journey. It is no dream, it is no vision. And, if he speaks of a *velo* in such a passage and of a *vero* to be seen through it, it must be that the literal event at the moment, taken as real, can be seen to point to and disclose the *other* meaning, which is that of moral allegory, even as the allegory of theologians would have it. Consider the Exodus disclosing the meaning called the *moral sense*: "the conversion of the soul from the misery of sin to the state of grace" (*Epist. ad Can. G.*, 22). The prologue of the poem is setting the reader up in such terms, and making recall possible.

As for mediaeval theory about allegory or Dante's own theory, for that matter, these are concerns of secondary importance when it is a question of the poem—precisely because such an experience of the poem is in itself more important than any and all the theories which might be devised to account for it.

However, for those readers of the *Comedy* who can have that experience (in the original, of course, with its full power), the question can and does arise whether Dante could have had some model in mind when he wrote his poem to be read in such a focus of double vision—or the question, say, whether Dante's great structure and Dante's art is, in any sense, an "imitation." But here I may be brief and assume that a thesis on this point may now be safely taken as demonstrated and widely accepted. Dante's structure is an imitation of two works by God, two books written by God, the created universe with its symbolism as one "book," and Holy Scripture with its allegory as the other. And through this realization we have come to a very fruitful distinction between what is the dimension of *allegory* in the poem and what is the dimension of *symbolism*.[3] But perhaps Mr. Green will say that this begs the question, and that his own article is at least clear evidence that all are not agreed on this.

In which case I must say I think we shall not get out of a considerable confusion on this matter of the two allegories unless we keep in mind one fundamental point respecting them—they are essentially statements of "reader's attitudes," or "focuses for reading." The "allegory of poets" is one, the "allegory of theologians" is another. And, once we have taken note of this fact, it becomes a simple matter for us to see the radical opposition between the two. This they have in common—both are focuses for reading allegory, that is, for reading in double vision. But between the two the whole point of difference lies with the way of reading the literal or first sense. Taken as reader's attitudes, the crucial questions which separate them as such are these: (1) Does the reader, *in the act of reading*, view the literal sense as "fable," "fiction," as "imaginary," and justified only if it conveys a "truth"? If so, this is the reading focus for the allegory of poets. Or (2) does the reader, *in the act of reading*, take the literal sense to be real, that is, take the events narrated as real, and does it happen that this literal line of event discloses along its way the shape of other events, also real? If so, this is the reading focus of the allegory of theologians.

The difference is not insignificant. And, if we put it so, then there can surely be no doubt as to which of these reader's attitudes is required for a *canzone* of the *Convivio*. Dante's prescription for the reader in this case is clearly stated in the work itself. The *canzoni* are to

[3] *Dante Studies*, pp. 1 ff.

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be read in the focus "allegory of poets." They were composed for that kind of reading. And this Mr. Green grants, of course. But the question, he tells us, remains for the *Comedy*. And, though he will grant a considerable difference in quality as between *Convivio* and *Comedy*, still he appears to maintain that the reader does not need to change his "focus for reading," in any essential or categorical way, as he turns from one work to the other. And that is indeed the question.

Now, since my thesis as to Dante's model for allegory in the *Comedy* is that such a model can be found in Scriptural allegory and nowhere else, and since this is a matter of "reader's attitudes," I may refer the debate on this point to the reading of Scripture itself—to recall that both kinds of allegory were recognized to exist in Holy Scripture and therefore both "reader's attitudes" were demanded in the reading of it.

On this point the whole exegetical tradition is clear. The Bible contains parables. And a parable told by Christ requires, of course, the kind of reading which is provided for in the "allegory of poets." On the other hand, the Bible contains the narrative of real historical events, such as the Exodus. These events signify other events, and this we may see if we adopt the kind of reading provided for in the "allegory of theologians." Now to read a parable in the latter focus or to read of the Exodus as if it were an imaginary event is simply wrong because not in focus. And I would suggest that to do what Mr. Green would have us do, put down the *Convivio* and take up the *Comedy* without changing our focus, is to require us to do something which, translated to the other case, would mean to read a parable told by Christ and then go right on with the narrative of Christ's actions as if there were no essential difference between the two, or only "a difference of quality." But I do not really believe that Mr. Green would read the Bible this way. In fact, I feel sure he would not. Why then does he insist that it should be done in passing from *Convivio* to *Comedy*? Or will he say that the Bible is one thing and Dante's poem another, and that the two are simply incommensurable?

But the fact that the Bible is one thing for Dante and his poem quite another is indeed the very point and foundation of what I take to be the simple truth about Dante's art. The *Comedy* is an imitation, and one of the most impressive that we shall ever know. Its mode of allegory has its unique model in Holy Scripture read in the focus of the "allegory of theologians." It could not be an "imitation" if there were not a difference between God's way of writing and the poet's. Surely there is no need for Mr. Green to point out once more that the theologians were firm to a man in insisting that only God could write as God did "write," making events themselves signify other events. Shall we really be so literal-minded as to think that, because this is so (and

because we know that Dante must have agreed), there can be no *imitation* of God's way of writing? Only God could create a universe, for that matter, in which things point beyond themselves. But can art not imitate His art? What of the mediaeval cathedral? And, granting the possibility of imitation, what better model could an artist find than God's work?

But it is by now evident, I think, that this whole view has a curious way of provoking reactions and indeed resentments, which go quite beyond historical or literary confines. To be sure, Mr. Green appears to state his own resentment in purely literary terms when he finds that such a view of Dante's art tends to disparage much mediaeval poetry or perhaps much poetry of any time. But over and beyond this feeling, is there not with him and with others who have objected to the reading of the *Comedy* in the focus "allegory of theologians" a sense of real repugnance at the notion that anyone, in this latter day of our enlightenment, should be asked to adopt a "reader's attitude" which looks so like superstition or obscurantism, or at least to require an act of "faith" which one is not at all disposed to make?

In fine, there are here symptoms, it has seemed to me, of some deep revolt in the mind which in this case is very much the "modern" mind as we so loosely call it. And I have thought that it would be interesting if we could devise some simple touchstone, a shibboleth, by which to test the *forma mentis* of this or that reader on this particular matter. What I have to suggest at the moment is a particular question which comes toward the end of the *Summa Theologica* (III, 39, 7) of Thomas Aquinas where the baptism of Christ is the general topic. The question is: "Whether the dove in which the Holy Ghost appeared was real?" Now let it be noted that this *is* a question of "reader's attitude." Shall the reader, as he reads of Christ's baptism, understand that the dove which descends to alight upon His head is a *real* dove, or not. It is granted that this *is* the Holy Ghost or an appearance of the Holy Ghost. But what of the *dove*? Is it a real dove ("verum animal") or is it merely the semblance of a dove?

Thomas Aquinas shows no hesitation in formulating his answer, of course, as every reader may see for himself. The dove is a real dove. The Holy Ghost chose to appear in a real dove on this occasion. There is no question of either-or, for Thomas. Nor would there have been for Augustine or for Dante, to encompass a span of a thousand years of thought and feeling on this matter. Philo Judaeus, of course, would have read in the other focus, even as he read his Genesis and the description there of Eden. Philo read in the "allegory of poets."

But Philo's mind is the Greek mind that in his own day was finding the Incarnation to be foolishness. And it is of interest to note that the

strongest argument which Thomas Aquinas can adduce to support the view that the dove is a real dove is the fact of the Incarnation. For Christ, he says, took not an imaginary body but a real body.

In studies of mine to which Mr. Green has referred I have proposed what for me remains a firm persuasion[4]—that the kind of allegory which Dante gives us in the *Comedy* has its root and very life-spring in the mystery of the Incarnation, by which I mean that such allegory is not even thinkable without the conception of the Logos made flesh and dwelling among us, and the mystery of two natures conjoined. And I would not further argue the point here.

But the problem, as Mr. Green raises it, is with Dante's "flesh." And we do well to consider the dove which is both a real dove and the Holy Ghost. And then think of Beatrice who is both the Florentine woman who died in 1290 and a person whom Virgil can recognize at once as that "lady of virtue through whom alone mankind ascends," etc., that is, Lady Philosophy or Sapientia.[5] Now the question of the dove is easily transferred to Beatrice, but it would be tedious to pursue it. Every serious student of Dante can see that this Beatrice of the *Comedy* is a Beatrice in whom an "incarnation" is manifest—two natures are here conjoined. The historical Beatrice of the *Vita Nuova* and the Logos figure of Sapientia of the *Convivio* are joined, in the *Comedy*, in one person—two natures in one person, and "or con altri or con altri reggimenti." The event is a poetic mystery. It was not predictable out of the perspective of either earlier work. It happened, and Dante began to write the *Comedy* with that "incarnation" at its center, leaving the *Convivio* the mere fragment we have.

But what was foolishness to the Greek mind will remain foolishness to many a modern mind. And these "modern minds" began to manifest themselves, in the reading of Dante, very early indeed; they were already Boccaccio and Petrarch and more than one of the early commentators. Mr. Green has reminded us of Boccaccio's views of the *Comedy* and of the ideas by which he defended poetry. Petrarch's views generally on poetry and the grounds for its defense are the same. Both refer frequently to Scripture, of course, in this defense. Yet there is a distinct tendency in both to avoid a clear recognition of the "allegory of theologians" in its essential difference from the "allegory of poets"; and one has the clear impression that the former notion has in it something (and we know what that is!) which is already unacceptable to their humanistic minds. But, if this is a true impression, it is but another telltale sign that the Renaissance was indeed beginning with them, as

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 93 ff.

[5] See *Report of the Dante Society*, 1956, pp. 29 ff., where I have dealt with this particular point at greater length.

we have so often claimed. And, though it took two centuries yet for the adjective *Divina* to attach itself to Dante's simple title *Comedia*, Boccaccio comes so close to doing this himself that the wonder is that it took so long to happen.

Why does the Renaissance see Dante's poem as *divine*? Why would Dante never have thought to name it so himself in his title? The question is not as idle as it may at first appear. That adjective is assigned to the *Comedy* out of a perspective of humanism already evident in Boccaccio and in Petrarch, a single generation after Dante—a perspective which, through the Renaissance, came to prevail in Dante studies down into our own century. It is a frame of thought in which the *Comedy* is inevitably, and because of its very subject matter, "distanced" or "skied." It is divine because it is theological. Whenever Boccaccio speaks of Dante as *divine* or *theologian*, he is of course reading him in the focus "allegory of poets," in a reader's attitude, that is, by which the poem becomes reducible to the theology it contains. Mr. Green approves, and would have it so himself. But, I would ask him finally: May we not be allowed to recover from the Renaissance, if only for a brief reader's moment, long enough to see that the dove is irreducible?

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MORAL VISION IN SPENSER, DU BELLAY, AND RONSARD

ALFRED W. SATTERTHWAITE

SOMETIMES the minor works of a great poet are more clearly evocative of his view of the world than are the greater, more carefully wrought poems. When the poet is not at his best, his ideas often betray an earnestness that reveals his most serious concerns and presents straightforwardly views which are seen less clearly in his finer work, because of the brilliance and the *éclat* which surrounds it. So it is with Edmund Spenser in the *Visions of the worldes vanitie*, one of his least-read works.

This is a sequence of twelve dull and colorless sonnets, written in the manner of the emblematic translations of 1569, but printed without accompanying emblematic illustrations. W. L. Renwick has pointed out quite properly that these sonnets are really not visions of the world's vanity "but parables of the limitations of power."[1] This they are indeed and, further, they are heavily moralistic parables; each sonnet is the twin of its neighbor in that it ends with a couplet both ponderous and trite, expressing some quasi-philosophical platitude. Renwick goes on to say that the poems "have little but historical value for us." True as this is, it is nevertheless interesting to note that the historical value is closely associated with the influence of the Pléiade, and that it is especially to Du Bellay that Spenser is indebted—the debt is more in borrowings of material than in transference of inspiration. The fact that the poems are among the most feeble that Spenser ever wrote makes any close critical examination of the text a fruitless endeavor; but the clear connection that they have as a whole with the melancholic aspect of Spenser's temperament, and the equally clear affinity that this melancholy has with that of Du Bellay—not to mention the contrast with Ronsard—makes a study of these pedestrian verses a matter of interest quite apart from their literary value.

The date of the sequence, like the date of most of the poems in the 1591 edition of Spenser's *Complaints*, is uncertain.[2] One would like, for Spenser's sake, to set the date early, but that would be to substitute sentiment for fact. One is forced to entertain the possibility that Spenser in his maturity could have been so victimized by melancholic depression as to construct a series of sonnets uniformly without distinction, a series which examines with reiterative monotony only one small

[1] *Complaints*, ed. W. L. Renwick (London, 1928), p. 255.
[2] *Studies in Spenser's Complaints* (New York, 1934), p. 69.

area of the general theme of mutability—a theme which Spenser treated elsewhere with such fullness and such ringing eloquence and sweetness.

There is general critical agreement that the *Visions of the worldes vanitie* is "unimportant and derivative."[3] L. S. Friedland has made a full and careful comparison of the many analogies that exist between these poems, *The Ruines of Time*, and the translations of the visions of both Petrarch and Du Bellay.[4] He notes that Spenser ends his poems with the summarizing couplet of Petrarch's visions, and that in more than one place Du Bellay's melancholy note is clearly heard.[5] It would seem, however, in spite of the derivative quality of the poems, that, since they are not translations and since none of the poems parallels Petrarch's or Du Bellay's to such an extent as to be called a paraphrase, one may take the melancholy note of the *Visions of the worldes vanitie* to be Spenser's own—and as clearly peculiar and individual as that of Du Bellay or of Petrarch. Assuming this to be true, I shall examine Spenser's poems in relation to similar poems by Du Bellay—and in contrast to others by Ronsard, which are also similar and yet fundamentally different.

All the poems in Spenser's sequence deal symbolically with animals,[6] with the exception of the first, which is introductory, and the last, which is a kind of summary and conclusion. These moralistic animal stories are given an Aesopian twist of allegory in the final sonnet, which suggests that Spenser might expect the lessons to be applied in a contemporary social context:

> When these sad sights were ouerpast and gone,
> My spright was greatly moued in her rest,
> With inward ruth and deare affection,
> To see so great things by so small distrest:
> Thenceforth I gan in my engrieued brest
> To scorne all difference of great and small,
> Sith that the greatest often are opprest,
> And unawares doe into daunger fall.
> And ye, that read these ruines tragicall
> Learne by their losse to loue the low degree,
> And if that fortune chaunce you vp to call
> To honours seat, forget not what you be:
> For he that of himselfe is most secure,
> Shall finde his state most fickle and vnsure.

Such a social interpretation has been made by Francesco Viglione,

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[4] "Spenser's Early Poems" (unpublished dissertation, New York University, 1912), Chap. 3, *passim*.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 14-49.

[6] In most cases, there are two animals involved, a greater and a lesser. The greater is always overcome by the lesser. Sonnets 7, 9, and 11 are exceptions, involving only one animal, respectively a worm, a remora, and some geese, pitted respectively against a cedar tree, a ship, and the ancient Gauls. The implication of the terminal moral is identical in all cases.

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who presents his arguments with occasional obfuscation and hyperbolic exaggeration; yet his judgments are often keen. He makes three chief points which are loosely connected with each other. First, a "zelo protestante ispirò anzitutto i 12 sonetti delle 'Visions of the Worlds Vanitie.' "[7] He says further of the sequence as a whole that "la superbia dei grandi, punita e distrutta, simboleggiava la superbia di Roma papale, che si doveva umiliare per una causa altamente nazionale."[8] Connected to this theory of pro-Protestant and anti-Roman nationalistic zeal is the influence of Du Bellay and of Petrarch. A contrast is drawn between Spenser and the continental poets because, in the case of Spenser's sonnets, "non sono i superbi che cadono per la mano di Dio, bensí gli umili che abbattono o sollevano i potenti, la quale idea era come una glorificazione delle classi meno abbienti, a cui apparteneva lo stesso Spenser."[9] Thus the initial inspiration of Petrarch and Du Bellay had a curious twofold result in Spenser's poem: the Roman Church was substituted for the Roman Empire, and the general theme of destruction that runs through Du Bellay's *Antiquitez de Rome* and his *Songe*, destruction through the inevitable mutability of all terrestrial things, was changed to a specific destruction of the Roman Church, based on Protestant zeal and on wishful thinking. The great who fall in "ruines tragicall" may thus be interpreted, paradoxically enough, as standing for some kind of combination of Lord Burghley and the Church of Rome.

Viglione's final point is that in the most general sense Du Bellay's influence in these poems is toward an "emozione lirica," and toward a sentiment "atteggiata a malinconia romantica." The Frenchman's poems "schiusero a lui un nuovo orizzonte."[10] These broad statements seem to have a degree of truth. But Viglione fails to note that Du Bellay's *Antiquitez* and his *Songe* are not in the purely Petrarchan tradition of love sonnets to a lady. Du Bellay did not fail to mark this himself; it was a fact of which he was proud.[11] Spenser's poem, also, stands as the first original sonnet sequence in English that is dedicated to another theme than love, and this is some kind of distinction, whatever it may be worth.

The posture of romantic melancholy that Viglione finds in both poets is pertinent too. Du Bellay's *Antiquitez* are clearly evocative of the engravings of Rome done so much later by Piranesi, standing close to

[7] *La poesia lirica di Edmondo Spenser* (Genoa, 1937), p. 129.
[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 130.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 132.
[11] The final lines of the last sonnet of the *Antiquitez* make this clear:

"Vanter te peux, quelque bas que tu sois,
D'avoir chanté, le premier des François,
L'antique honneur du peuple à longue robbe."

the romantic movement, and suggestive also of that most superb sonnet on ruins, the *Ozymandias* of Shelley, which came at the full flood of the movement. Du Bellay was the herald of a sentiment that was to become an integral part of all definitions of "romantic" feeling—a nostalgia for the far past, distant, elusive, and unattainable except through the capacity of the poet or the artist to summon up the memory with vivid poignancy.

So also Spenser; but his evocation of the past occurs not so much in these poems of the *Vision of the worldes vanitie*, as Viglione seems to suggest, as in the *Faerie Queene*, that ancestor of Keats as well as of Milton, and in *The Ruines of Time*. In the present sequence Spenser is not concerned with the past as is Du Bellay in the *Antiquitez*, but with the present, or perhaps with timelessness. In some of his work Spenser stands beside Du Bellay as an ancestor of the romantic feeling for ruins and for ancient, misty magnificences—but not in the sonnets of the *Visions of the worldes vanitie*. On the contrary, the mention of "ruines tragicall" in the ninth line of the terminal sonnet is evocative of the mediaeval definition of tragedy represented by Sackville's *A Mirror for Magistrates*, Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*, and the *De Casibus* tradition of the Middle Ages in general, rather than of the ruins in Du Bellay's *Antiquitez* or even those in Spenser's own *The Ruines of Time*.[12] The new horizon that Du Bellay opened to Spenser fails to appear in the *Visions of the worldes vanitie*.

If the theory that Protestant zeal caused Spenser to write these allegorical sonnets were true, one might expect to find in the sonnets themselves some clear indication, whether explicit or symbolical, of propagandistic intention. One searches in vain, however, for any implied connection between the bull, the crocodile, the ship, or any of the other examples of pride, and the Roman Church. Far from containing any clear symbols either of Rome or of Protestantism, Spenser's sonnets do not even have a broad or general religious implication, as do those of Du Bellay's *Antiquitez* and his *Songe*. The morality of the didactic aspect of the sonnets is timeless and universal (and, as has been said above, commonplace and trite)—neither nationalistic nor religiously zealous. Spenser's melancholy suggests the more general *lacrimae rerum* of Virgil, a sadness for the ineluctability of fate, rather than a specific zeal for the destruction of a Church which had been sufficiently powerful to resist the shock of the Reformation, and which could be attacked more effectively in other ways. Nor do these poems

[12] Viglione has perhaps been influenced by L. S. Friedland's "Spenser's Early Poems," where Friedland says concerning the final sonnet of the *Visions of the worldes vanitie* that Spenser touches upon Du Bellay's near-romantic theme of "ruines tragicall" (p. 14-49). It would seem that Friedland too, correct as he is in respect to Du Bellay's near-romantic theme, misread as did Viglione the implications of "ruines tragicall."

lend themselves to the kind of ecclesiastical interpretation that Van der Noot attached to the sonnets of Du Bellay's *Songe*. They are emblematic, after the fashion of the *Songe*, but the implication of the word pictures is nonreligious.

They are also reflective, as are the sonnets of Du Bellay's *Antiquitez*, and they reflect a similar eternal note of sadness. It might be thought that, in taking the material or mechanical aspects of inspiration from these works of Du Bellay and generalizing the specific theme of the fall of Roman monuments, Spenser achieved a larger, a more ample subject. This, however, is not the case. Spenser's subject, the fall of the mighty from high places, is indeed at first glance broader and of greater scope than the more narrow and specific fall of the Roman Empire. But in choosing strange and, in most cases, monstrous animals as victims of a prideful reversal Spenser has dehumanized his subject, a process that he carries further by making small and usually unpleasant animals the agents of the reversal. He has made his subject both monstrous and petty. On the other hand, Du Bellay has imbued a lament for architectural monuments with a deep sense of the melancholy of human works, the futility of human aspiration. Du Bellay's subject has both greater scope and greater depth because his reflections are associated with human life; Spenser has buried his subject in a series of studies of disasters in natural history.

Spenser's poems are Protestant in the pedestrian simplicity of the moral expression. They contain no Roman richness, no continental ornamentation, but a grey English bleakness. It is unlikely, however, that the plainness of the sonnets of the *Vision of the worldes vanitie* was intended to make the poems stand in some way as sectarian propaganda; more probably this is simply the result of failure of inspiration, combined with failure to revise a barren work. The whole context of Spenser's work, in which richness of texture and tapestried ornamentation is so conspicuous and usually so beautiful, and in which it is allied with a specifically Protestant point of view, increases this likelihood.

Let us consider now the social theme of these unimportant sonnets, in the statement of which Viglione seems closer to the truth. The abasement of the powerful by the humble is said to represent a glorification of the "classi meno abbienti" to which Spenser himself belonged. The final sonnet, quoted above, seems to give substance to this theory; it is the only thread in the tissue of Viglione's suggestions that will hold with very little qualification. In the following lines there is apparently a real exhortation to a democratic point of view that is quite modern:

> Learne by their losse to loue the low degree,
> And if that fortune chaunce you vp to call
> To honours seat, forget not what you be...

It is an exaggeration, however, to say that such lines, or the poems as a whole, are a glorification of people of low degree, a kind of full meed of self-praise, if not actually a call to democratic action. In the poems themselves, the final cause of all the falls is pride, and the action of the lowly animal is only the efficient cause. There is no question of glorification.

Spenser's emphasis is certainly not on the revolutionary idea of the humble classes pulling down the mighty, as his phrasing might seem to indicate.[13] To see it would be to view Spenser in Marxist rather than Elizabethan terms. The emphasis throughout is on the fall of pride, a moral rather than a social idea, and one ever dear to Spenser, as may be observed almost everywhere in his work. The morality is evidently more internal than Viglione implies, and the external fall is merely the outward form of the inner moral sickness. Thus, though there is expression of concern for persons of low degree, there is no glorification of them. On the contrary, the terminal sonnet is a warning to the lowly. And a warning is more appropriately Spenserian than is either self-praise or self-sympathy.

It is precisely the admonitory aspect of the sonnets of the *Visions of the worldes vanitie*, and especially of the terminal one, that distinguishes the tone of the poems from the sonnets of Du Bellay's *Antiquitez*, his *Songe*, and for that matter, from the melancholy sonnets of *Les Regrets*. Spenser's poems are clearly and deliberately hortatory, and the exhortations temper the quality of the melancholy by the injection of positive moral advice. Du Bellay's melancholy is unequivocally black, unillumined by any suggestion that an alteration in human conduct will improve the state of affairs in this unstable world. Du Bellay is enshrouded in the darkness of Gérard de Nerval's "soleil noir de la Melancolie"; Spenser's sun is merely below the horizon, ready to rise and shine if there be some amelioration in human behavior. A few examples will clarify this distinction between Spenser's purely didactic purpose and Du Bellay's more purely poetic intention.

In Spenser's series, the terminal couplet of the last sonnet is the epitome of all that has gone before:

> For he that of himselfe is most secure,
> Shall finde his state most fickle and vnsure.

The point here is that security in this world is very uncertain, and not merely that—a state of seeming security by its very nature lulls the secure person into a condition of unwatchfulness. Security itself contains the germ of the future fall; it leads first to pride, an excessive sense of security, an overvaluation of place. It ripens the victim for destruction. This view is originally Greek, and it is fundamentally moral, not social.[14] The purpose of its expression is didactic. Similarly, at the

[13] See above, p. 137.

[14] Herodotus, *Historiae*, ed. Carolus Hude (Oxford, 1947), I, 32.

end of the second sonnet Spenser writes, "So by the small the great is oft diseased." At the end of the third, "Why then should greatest things the least disdaine, / Sith that so small so mightie can constraine?" These are the usual types of antithetical endings for all the sonnets in this series. One more will perhaps make this clear to the point of surfeit: "So weakest may anoy the most of might." The poet, thus, is always present at the end of the poem, to make quite certain that the reader shall not miss the point. Each moral is hammered home and, lest the accumulation be insufficient, the final sonnet sums up the preceding eleven.

This is very unlike Du Bellay's method in either the *Antiquitez* or the *Songe*. In the former, with the exception of the thirty-second (the last) sonnet, which is entirely personal, and the seventh, which is personal in its final sestet—making what is apparently a reference to the pains of Du Bellay's illness[15]—he indulges in no personal statements of opinion at all, no reflections loaded with moral lessons. He is content to pass from description to description, from image to image, and to leave the reader to draw his own conclusions—though it is always clear to the perceptive reader that the poet thinks Rome has sinned in her excesses.[16] The work is one of nostalgic meditation; much of it is lovely, all of it is hopeless. It is radically unlike the *Visions of the worldes vanitie*, for neither there nor elsewhere in his work is Spenser without hope or without advice. This is perhaps the difference between pessimism and melancholy. In Sonnet LXXVII of *Les Regrets*, a group of poems occasioned by the same stay in Rome that produced the *Antiquitez*, Du Bellay himself makes clear his bitterness, "Car je ry, comme on dit, d'un riz sardonien."[17]

Between the sonnets of the *Songe* and those of the *Visions of the worldes vanitie* there is a closer connection, although even here the affinity is more formal than thematic. Du Bellay's series of fifteen sonnets is governed throughout by the statement of the Daemon in the sestet of the first:

> Puis m'escria: Voy (dit-il) & contemple
> Tout ce qui est compris sous ce grand temple,
> Voy comme tout n'est rien que vanité.
> Lors cognoissant la mondaine inconstance,
> Puis que Dieu seul au temps fait resistance,
> N'espere rien qu'en la divinité.

[15] Du Bellay suffered from pulmonary tuberculosis all his life, as well as from a painful form of deafness—though he is presumed to have died of apoplexy.

[16] V.-L. Saulnier, *Du Bellay*, p. 138.

[17] This sardonic quality is perhaps shown most plainly in a stanza of Du Bellay's *La Complainte du Desesperé* (1552), lines 475-80. The idea of the desirability of prenatal death must indeed have haunted Du Bellay, for he had written of it earlier, in *Vers lyriques*, Ode XII, lines 25-29. This poem, like so many others of Du Bellay's, and of Spenser's, deals in general with the "caduq' " in life—mutability.

The remaining fourteen sonnets are all descriptive, and never again is there any commentary by the poet that is intended to guide or form the reader's opinion, to instruct him on the proper moral attitude. This is not to say that these emblematic poems are meaningless, or that all the meanings are totally ambiguous; it is merely to say that the symbols remain as symbols, without explanation by the poet. That the poems are broadly didactic is clear; as clear as is the fact that exactly what they teach is so clouded as to be susceptible of a variety of interpretations.

It is this open quality in the symbols that permitted Van der Noot to use these poems, by a Catholic poet, as Protestant propaganda. What the sonnets of Du Bellay teach is not presented in the explicit manner that Spenser assumes in the *Visions of the worldes vanitie*, and for this reason the mood of nostalgia, of melancholy, is more pure and more black, unalloyed by the personal obtrusions of the pedagague and the moralist. To be sure, Du Bellay recommends hope in God; but he does not pursue his reader throughout with specific suggestions. In this he is more tolerant than Spenser, and in this greater toleration one may see reflected in miniature one of the essential differences between the poetry of Spenser and that of the Pléiade. Broadly speaking, Spenser teaches hortatory moral lessons, while Du Bellay and Ronsard, on the whole, tend rather to teach literary lessons. This is not to deny that the English poet is a literary theorist, nor is it to say that Ronsard never gave moral instruction in his verse; it is merely to point out the proper emphasis. It should also be observed that this tolerant quality on the part of Du Bellay is confined to the texts under discussion, and does not pervade all of his work. It is the pedagogue in Du Bellay the poet that elsewhere brings him so close to Spenser, and at the same time separates him from his great contemporary rival, Pierre de Ronsard. It places him in a position intermediate between the wholly moral English poet and the almost amoral Frenchman.

Ronsard is never melancholy, nostalgic, or bitter in the same sense as Du Bellay. His melancholy is romantic and unreal; his nostalgia is not for the irrecoverable or the unattainable, but for lost pleasures that will very likely return once more; and his bitterness is often that of wounded sensibilities or of wounded pride. In these respects he is more representative to the full flood of the French Renaissance than is Du Bellay; he is closer far to Rabelais, though without Rabelais' persuasive vulgarity. Older and longer lived than Du Bellay, he is always more youthful. His best work is gay and carefree, neither reflective nor dark. When in some of his longer and more pedestrian poems he puts upon himself the mantle of philosophical meditation, he is cheerful rather than melancholy. When he contemplates mutability, corruption, and death, he is more likely to see through them to regeneration and rebirth, than to dwell upon the "caduq' " with sadness or pessimism. One of his more

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gloomy elegies will partially clarify this point. Early in this poem of 138 lines he writes, concerning man in general:

> De tous les animaux le plus lourd animal,
> C'est l'homme, le sujet d'infortune et de mal...

and thirty-two lines later:

> ...et vouloir tout sçavoir,
> Vouloir parler de tout, et toutes choses voir,
> Et vouloir nostre esprit par estude contraindre
> A monter jusqu'au Ciel, où il ne peut attaindre?
> Tout n'est que vanité, et pure vanité:
> Tel desir est bourreau de nostre humanité...[18]

This would seem to be an echo of Ecclesiastes, the sort of echo that was dear to the hearts of Du Bellay and Spenser. It is also a castigation of *outrecuidance*. But, in the text of the poem itself, there is throughout a clear denial of this melancholy middle portion. The mood as a whole is light, though isolated lines may proclaim the sadness, tragedy, and vanity of human life. The poem is presumed to be of early composition, though it was first published in the 1584 edition of Ronsard's collected works; it is an imitation of a poem by Johannes Secundus, whose neo-Latin verse so influenced the early Ronsard.[19] His remarks on the *condition humaine* quoted above are more of a concession to convention than an expression of sincere feeling, just as the further lines which condemn *hubris* in man are the occasion for making a paradoxical contrast with the life of La Haye, to whom the poem is written, and who is specifically stated to have succeeded in surpassing the limits usually set on human achievement. Toward the end of the poem, Ronsard writes:

> Mais tout ainsi, La Haye, honneur de nostre temps,
> Qu'entre les animaux, par les champs habitans,
> On en voit quelques-uns, qui en prudence valent
> Plus que leurs campagnons, et les hommes egalent
> De sagesse et d'esprit, souventefois aussi,
> Entre cent millions d'hommes qui sont icy,
> On en voit quelques-uns qui dans leurs cœurs assemblent
> Tant de rares vertus, qu'aux grands Dieux ils ressemblent
> Comme toi, bien appris, bien sage et bien discret...

Thus the whole thesis of the vanity of human endeavor is undercut by the example of the surpassingly brilliant La Haye, a man who succeeds in the practice of "surquedry."

The poem ends not merely with a wholly conventional assertion of faith in eternal life through Jesus Christ, but in the very last line a conclusion is drawn from this faith that is not conventional: "...tu me

[18] *Œuvres*, ed. Cohen (Paris, 1950), Elegie XV, II, 77.
[19] *Ibid.*, notes, p. 1059.

fais cognoistre / Que rien plus sainct que l'homme au monde ne peut naistre." These words belong to the exuberant spirit of the French Renaissance in Ronsard's youth, as a similar exuberance and a sense of human certainty had characterized the Italian Renaissance in the late fifteenth century. They imply an overweeningness more typical of the ardor and enthusiasm of the Latin countries—an enthusiasm so frequently expressed by Ronsard—less typical of the spirit of the English Renaissance and especially not typical of Spenser.[20]

A further and somewhat more weighty example of this tendency toward cheerfulness in the face of vanity and mutability is Ronsard's "Discours, de l'alteration et change des choses humaines,"[21] from the *Premier Livre des Poemes* (1560), a more ambitious poem, in length (216 lines) and in subject matter. It is not an imitation, and was written in the poet's maturity. The poem begins with a very brief survey of historical examples of degeneration, which is immediately followed by eight lines castigating Protestantism as a modern instance. Ronsard then expounds his theory of cyclic regeneration, an idea which permeates the whole body of his more serious work:

> Le temps mangeard toute chose consomme.
> Villes, Chasteaux, Empires; voire l'homme,
> L'homme à qui Dieu fait part de sa maison,
> Qui pense, parle et discourt par raison,
> Duquel l'esprit s'en-vole outre la nue,
> Changeant sa forme en une autre se mue.
> Il est bien vray, à parler proprement,
> On ne meurt point, on change seulement
> De forme en autre, et ce changer s'appelle
> Mort, quand on prend une forme nouvelle...

It should be noted how the third line of this quotation retracts the phrase "voire l'homme" in the second, as if salvation were almost a matter of course (except, naturally, for Protestants). There is no melancholy, no pessimism, no regret in this enumeration of cities, castles, and empires that come and go; their passing is presented with a light air, an air of *tant pis*; nor indeed is it a serious misfortune. Further on in the poem, the question is asked: "Qu'est devenu l'Empire d'Assyrie, / Du Mede et Grec?..." and is answered in a similar tone of lightness if not actually of levity.

The important point, however, to which the poem as a whole is devoted, is contained in the last four lines quoted above—everything is seen to be in a state of development, and death is only a phase of this, an intermediary phase between the old and the new form. For this reason there can be no sense of loss or of regret—only a sense of *carpe*

[20] It should be pointed out that there are conspicuous exceptions to this generalization, such as Marlowe, Nashe, Harvey, Bacon, and possibly Chapman.

[21] *Œuvres*, ed. Cohen, II, 376-381.

diem while living, and the promise of eternal blessedness in the end, based on a conviction that salvation is no more than the due of the aristocratic poet. This last is clearly expressed in the final ten lines of the poem, which are in the conventional form of a prayer that God protect France, the King, his family, Chauveau (to whom the poem is written), the French people, and the author. The prayer is without fervor and without humility; it is the usual prayer of the professional court poet, and it gives one the impression that Ronsard feels that God is by nature a Francophile.[22]

Ronsard seemed, curiously enough, to find a sense of security and of well-being for himself in his theory of cyclical change. He loved the variety and the flux of nature, the lavish productivity of spring, the excessive ardor of summer, the fruition and the sicknesses of autumn, somber but not melancholy, and the frigidity of winter, sterile itself but pregnant with the rich promise of a new spring.[23] It is almost as if he felt himself to be a part of nature, joyously caught up in the eternally revolving wheels of time. In Ode XIX of *Le Troisieme Livre des Odes* he writes gaily, in the opening lines:

> D'ou vient cela, Pisseleu, que les hommes
> De leur nature aiment le changement,
> Et qu'on ne voit en ce monde ou nous sommes
> Un seul qui n'ait un divers jugement?[24]

He is not saddened by mutability, by change, by death, or by corruption; he is invigorated and enlivened. Where Du Bellay and Spenser write *ubi sunt?* Ronsard writes *carpe diem!* Where they write laments, Ronsard writes invectives. Where they dwell in reflective melancholy on the forever lost, Ronsard moves swiftly from blossom to blossom in the present, catching each blossom before it is full blown; and, when it is blasted, sees in it the seed of its regeneration and never fixes his gaze in pensive pessimism on the moment of corruption.

It might be asked at this point with some justification whether the general cheerfulness that Ronsard exhibits implies that he was never serious or earnest in his work; and the reply, of course, is that he was often serious with a deadly earnestness, and earnest with a crushingly exaggerated *livresque* pedantry. This is to be seen in the long poems in self-defense against the attacks of Genevan Protestants, especially Theodore de Bèze, and in his prose tract written in the bitter quarrel.[25]

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[22] Further examples which illustrate the pervasiveness of Ronsard's cyclical theory of life—death—life may be found in his *Hymne de la Mort* and in "A luy-mesme" (*Epitaphes de divers sujects*), among many others. *Œuvres*, ed. Cohen, II, 281-289, 480.

[23] See the *Hymnes* to the seasons, *Œuvres*, ed. Cohen, II, 230-259.

[24] See Horace, *Satires*, I, 1, lines 1-3.

[25] See the *Discours des Miseres de ce Temps*, the *Continuation* of the same, and the *Response de Pierre de Ronsard aux injures et calomnies de je ne sçay*

Raymond Lebègue points out that Ronsard shared with Du Bellay an intense dislike of the "rigorisme" of Protestantism,[26] and that this dislike was enflamed in Du Bellay by his passage through Geneva in 1557 and his observation of the "avidité," the "envie," and the "pharisaïsme" of the inhabitants. In common with most Frenchmen of their time, Ronsard and Du Bellay saw in the austerity of the Calvinists only a mask for all vices.[27] Ronsard's feeling in this matter, however, exploded for different reasons than Du Bellay's; for Ronsard's life extended through the religious wars and massacres of the 1560s and the 1570s, and his temper was provoked by personal Protestant attacks and by the presence of actual warfare in the neighborhood of his native Vendôme. His "Response" to the Calvinists is in the tradition of unbridled theological controversy and is filled with what Lebègue calls "grossières injures."[28] These vulgarities are certainly serious, as were those of Thomas More before him and John Milton afterward; but they are the product of a particular situation, and do not represent an aspect of a broad and enduringly contemplative moral view of the world such as both Du Bellay and Spenser held. Ronsard's seriousness here is that of anger produced by personal outrage; it is not based on a comprehensive and philosophical view of the innately and inevitably injurious nature of life itself.[29]

Further, in the long and quasi-philosophical or quasi-scientific poems which flowed so profusely from his pen in the troubled 1560s, though one finds a certain decorous seriousness in the *Hymnes*, the *Poemes*, the *Discours*, and the *Elegies*, this seriousness is largely a matter of convention, as some of the ideas which he expresses are themselves the conventional Neoplatonic theories of the educated man of his time, derived partly from Oriental occultism which reached France through Marsilio Ficino and partly from Ficino's own theories.[30] Ronsard is not a thinker, any more than he is a moralist. In the expression of philosophical ideas he is vague and indecisive; he avoids clear answers, and takes refuge chiefly in the use of the myth as an embodiment for ideas, or perhaps as a substitute.[31]

Ronsard's early tendency toward pedantry of language is associated with this avoidance of clear statements of philosophical questions and an

quels Predicantereaux et Ministreaux de Genève, all in verse; and *Response aux injures et calomnies de je ne sçay quels Predicans et Ministres de Genève, sur son Discours et Continuation des Miseres de ce Temps*, and "Epistre au Lecteur" in *Les Trois Livres des Nouvelles Poesies* (1564), in prose.

[26] *Ronsard, l'homme et l'œuvre* (Paris, 1950), p. 87.

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

[29] It should be noted here to Ronsard's credit that, although he was carried away by the religious hatreds of the 1560s, he was not among the poets who celebrated the Massacre by St. Bartholomew in 1572. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

[31] *Ibid.*

equal reluctance to present incisive answers. This pedantry became a habit which he never fully conquered, though he tried throughout his life to control the *livresque* penchant which began with his youthful classical studies. In his maturity it became not a fault merely, but a vice. It was at an advanced age (1574) that he wrote the notorious line: "Ocymore, dyspotome, oligochronien . . ."[32] Concerning this pseudo-French line of verse Gustave Cohen writes, "Malgré les belles déclarations qu'on a lues . . . Ronsard n'est pas guéri de ses intempérances classiques."[33]

That he was persistently earnest in such pedantries is beyond question, as both Du Bellay and Spenser were earnest in their own linguistic experiments; but his is a grim and often ridiculous earnestness of a strictly nonmoral variety. The pedagogue may be pedantic, as Spenser is in the *Visions of the worldes vanitie*, but it does not follow that Ronsard was a pedagogue because he was pedantic. He felt himself called upon by higher forces to be a seer, the mouthpiece of divine inspiration; but much of the result of this inspiration was bookish theorizing whose meaning is very little more discernible than that of scattered Sibylline leaves. He could not stoop to be a simple teacher, as could Du Bellay occasionally and Spenser often, because his temperament, which has been called both "épicurien" and "arthritique,"[34] did not admit such a downward step into the real world; he taught nothing simple and straightforward except that one should indulge and enjoy one's senses, because he knew nothing else simple and straightforward that he could teach. His mind was oversophisticated, and all morality except the Epicurean was repugnant to him; he did not find morality elevating, he found it depressing.

All of Ronsard's best work is in the purely lyric vein: short poems, almost thoughtless, amoral or immoral, lovely, delicate, and marvelously melodious, but without weight or substance. The justly famous "A Sa Maitresse," of *Le Premier Livre des Odes*, in its eighteen lines says only one thing: "Cueillez, cueillez vostre jeunesse."[35] As a *carpe diem* poem, it is as fine as any in any language; but *carpe diem* poems, in the end, do not say very much, and they certainly teach very little that could be called moral. An additional and completely parallel example is the best-known sonnet of the series to Marie: "Comme on voit sur la branche au mois de mai la rose, / En sa belle jeunesse, en sa premiere fleur . . ."[36] In this poem the exquisite language is not overburdened with any message of serious import; in a context which mentions death

[32] "Le Tombeau de Marguerite de France, Duchesse de Savoie," *Œuvres*, ed. Cohen, II, 480.
[33] *Ibid.*, notes, p. 1091.
[34] Lebègue, *Ronsard*, pp. 139, 143.
[35] *Œuvres*, ed. Cohen, I, 420.
[36] *Ibid.*, I, 184.

and obsequies and tears there is no feeling of mortality, and corruption is something which takes place in another world.

Ronsard's poetic world is almost wholly sunlit; it is the Graeco-Roman Vendômois countryside of fields, streams, fountains, roses; the caves are dark, but they are not gloomy, because they contain nymphs; it is a world of wine and maidens, songs, odes, or sonnets, a world of constant flux in a constant present.

> Verson ces roses pres ce vin,
> Pres de ce vin verson ces roses
> Et boivon l'un à l'autre, à fin
> Qu'au coeur nos tristesses encloses
> Prennent en boivant quelque fin . . .[37]

The "tristesse" is evanescent, it is always vaporous and formless, ready to be dispelled by food or drink or poetry, by roses, or by a passing shepherdess. What remains after the "tristesse" is joy, joy which is to be had for the asking.

This is far indeed from Spenser's world of uncertainty and mutability, a world of unexpected falls and reversals, in which it is joy itself that is evanescent and will always be so until a final day shall bring eternal joy—a kind of joy which was no serious concern of Ronsard's until his deathbed brought it into the forefront of his mind. For Spenser as for Du Bellay, the past broods darkly over the present, and the sun is obscured. But for Spenser, the sun may come out clear, and it often does, though not in the *Visions of the worldes vanitie*.

Not so for Du Bellay; happiness for him is always elsewhere, or in another time. Although like Ulysse he could return ultimately to Paris and to Anjou, he was always most keenly aware of what had been lost, of what was irrevocable. The familiar "Heureux qui" theme in Du Bellay rarely refers to the poet himself, or to the present, but to some vanished golden moment that is either absolutely past or absolutely unattainable in the present.

Du Bellay lives under a dark sun; Spenser can see not only darkness, but also rainbows and an occasional full and stunning light; Ronsard lives under a clear and brilliant classical sun, as unconcerned about the darkness as he is about the morrow.

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[37] *Ibid.*, I, 575 (Ode XXXVIII, *Quatriesme Livre des Odes*).

TRISTAN AND COURTLY ADULTERY

JOHN H. FISHER

IN *DE AMORE*, Andreas Capellanus described an ideal of a virtuous and ennobling love which can exist only outside of marriage. Its four stages culminate "in the yielding of the whole person."[1] Although Andreas urgently implored his friend Walter—or even more paradoxically had the *nobilior* implore his lady—to follow a Platonic *amor purus*, he permitted *amor mixtus* "which gets its effect from every delight of the flesh and culminates in the final act of Venus"; and he had the noble lady reply: "I wonder if anyone was ever found with such continence that he could resist the promptings of passion and control the actions of his body."[2] Unwilling himself to assert that his love must be adulterous, Andreas included a letter from Marie, Countess of Champagne, dated May 1, 1174, stating baldly: "We declare and hold as firmly established that love cannot exert its powers between two people who are married to each other."[3] The contrast between shameful suspicion that is a vice in a husband and noble jealousy that is virtue in a lover,[4] as well as decisions in three cases involving marriage, rendered by great ladies in the courts of love,[5] make it clear that adulterous

[1] *The Art of Courtly Love*, trans. J. J. Perry (New York, 1941), p. 42. The Latin, from *De Amore*, ed. Amadeo Pagès (Castellon de la Plana, 1929), p. 16, runs: "in totius personae concessione."

[2] Parry, pp. 122, 123; Pagès, p. 94: "amor mixtus ... qui omni carnis dilectationi suum praestat effectum et in extremo Veneris opere terminatur." "Miror enim, si in quoquam tanta sit abstinentia carnis inventa, ut unquam voluptatis promeruerit impetum refrenare et corporis motibus obviare."

[3] Parry, p. 106; Pagès, p. 79: "Ab anno MCLXXIIII Kal. maii. Indictione vii ... Dicimus enim et stabilito tenore firmamus, amorem non posse suas inter duos iugales extendere vires."

[4] Parry, p. 102; Pagès, pp. 74-75. "Love cannot exist without jealousy ... jealousy between lovers is commended by every man who is experienced in love, while between husband and wife it is condemned throughout the world ... A truly jealous man is always afraid that his services may not be sufficient to retain the love of the woman he loves ... and he is so tormented with anxiety that he wonders whether she doesn't have another lover ... But that this last aspect of jealousy is not proper for a married man is clearly apparent, for a husband cannot suspect his wife without the thought that such conduct on her part is shameful." "Nam maritus de uxore sine turpi cogitatione suspicionem habere non potest."

[5] Parry, p. 171; Pagès, pp. 143-144: Case VIII, in which Ermengarde of Narbonne asserts that marriage cannot exclude love; IX, in which marital affection and true love are distinguished; X, in which love is forbidden between divorced couples. The first of the longer list of the rules of love is "Marriage is no real excuse for not loving" (Parry, p. 184; Pagès, p. 159). The danger inherent in drawing conclusions from passages taken out of context is particularly acute in such an ambivalent work as *De Amore*. Throughout the first book the author protests repeatedly the superiority of *amor purus*, all the while dwelling on *amor mixtus*. No one, to my knowledge, has argued that Andreas does not condone adultery except D. W. Robertson, Jr., "The Subject of the *De Amore* of Andreas

love was not intended to disrupt the marriage bond but to coexist with it.

At the same time that Andreas was writing his treatise, his fellow countryman Chrétien de Troyes was handling the problem of courtly adultery in his romances. The first, *Erec*, written a decade or so before *De Amore*, is a tale of adventure and married love with hardly a trace of the love service and adultery which mark the courtly tradition. The second, *Cligés*,[6] introduces Ovidian ritual but specifically rejects the cult of adultery. Cligés has been called an anti-Tristan.[7] In lines 2785 ff., Cligés' youth is compared to the youth of Tristan; in 3145 ff. (and again in 5250 ff. and 5305 ff.), Fenice makes disparaging contrasts between the love of Tristan and Iseult and her love affair with Cligés; in 3217 ff. a magic potion is introduced (rather different in effect from that in *Tristan*); in 3965 ff. Cligés undertakes a combat with a Saxon duke for the sake of his uncle and the Greeks, similar to Tristan's combat with Marhault; and in 6348 ff. the rustic retreat of Cligés and Fenice and the manner of their discovery generally parallel like passages in *Tristan*. As Fenice three times points out, the objectionable feature of the story of Tristan and Iseult is that Iseult gave herself to both her husband and her lover—exactly the adulterous situation which *De Amore* appears to assert as essential to courtly love. The principal concern of this romance is with Fenice's efforts to preserve her chastity for her lover. Before 1170 in Troyes, then, the problem of courtly adultery was under consideration, and the story of Tristan and Iseult was regarded as a prototype of the school that approved it.

In *Lancelot*, written just about the date of Marie's letter in *De Amore*, Chrétien made use of an abduction plot which parallels the adulterous doctrine of *De Amore* in two essential respects. First, the rescuer is the lover instead of the husband; and, second, instead of ending in elopement, like *Cligés* and most great love stories from Helen of Troy to Dierdre, Godefroi de Leigni's continuation ends with the lovers back at Arthur's court, and with Guinevere presumably cohabiting with Arthur and Lancelot as Fenice had refused to do with the Emperor and Cligés. Lest anyone mistake their relation for *amor purus*, Chrétien included (lines 4550 ff.) an assignation in which, like Tristan, Lancelot left bloodstains on the queen's bed sheets.[8] Such evidently were

Capellanus," *MP*, L (1953), 145-161. Although I agree that the concept of adultery was elsewhere employed allegorically, I find no evidence that this is the case in *De Amore*.

[6] *Cligés*, ed. W. Foerster, revised by A. Hilka (Halle, 1921). The sequence of Chrétien's romances can be established by internal references, but their dates are subject to controversy. *Cligés* probably dates from about the time of Marie's marriage in 1164 (see Parry, p. 14, for references).

[7] By Foerster, pp. xxxiv-lii, with a full analysis of the parallels.

[8] This episode appears to be one of the most primitive scenes in *Tristan*; Joseph Bédier, *La Roman de Tristan par Thomas* (Paris, 1902-05), II, 158. It is generally recognized as a borrowing in *Lancelot*, e.g., Gustave Cohen, *Chrétien de Troyes* (Paris, 1931), p. 260.

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the "matiere et san" which Countess Marie contributed to the romance.[9]

We are dealing here with no diffuse *Zeitgeist* but with very specific phenomena, the earliest asservations that courtly love must be both sensual and adulterous, made at nearly the same time and place by two authors both acknowledging the influence of the same patroness.[10] How is this to be explained? Were Andreas and Chrétien merely crystallizing a sentiment already current among the troubadour poets of the south of France, or is some new influence discernible? Certainly a new subject matter is discernible in the Celtic materials of *Tristan* and *Lancelot*, and in *De Amore*[11] itself. I should like to argue that the explicit approval of adultery in *De Amore* is a concomitant of this new material—that it can better be explained as a dim reflection of the cultural backgrounds of *Tristan* and *Lancelot* than by the traditional references to Ovidian, Provençal, or contemporary social influences. I shall deal first with the adultery in the two romances and then go on to consider whether this would account any more adequately than other influences for the cult of adultery in Andreas.

Both *Tristan* and *Lancelot* appear to be adaptations by thirteenth-century court poets of legendary material from a much earlier era. Of the two, *Tristan* preserves more clearly the cultural background in which adultery might seem to be approved. The traditional account, as it emerges from a comparison of what remains of five early versions,[12] may be divided into three parts: the events leading up to Tristan's bringing Iseult to Mark, the lovers' flight to the forest, and the events

[9] *Lancelot*, ed. Foerster (Halle, 1899), lines 26-29. The best evidence for the date of this romance is the parallel between this appeal to the authority of the countess for the adulterous plot and the dated letter in *De Amore*. Cohen, p. 87 and U. T. Holmes, *History of Old French Literature* (Chapel Hill, 1937), pp. 166 ff., would date *Cligés* 1162 and *Lancelot* shortly after 1164. So long as the two romances precede *De Amore* and invoke the same patroness, the exact dates are irrelevent to this discussion.

[10] Chrétien's name indicates that he was associated with the countess' court at Troyes, in Champagne. Amy Kelly has argued persuasively in "Eleanor of Aquitaine and Her Courts of Love," *Speculum*, XII (1937), 3-19, and *Eleanor of Aquitaine* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), pp. 157-168, that Andreas' compendium describes the social conventions in Eleanor's court at Poitiers. However, since Andreas assigns Marie the leading role, it seems more probable that it was written down in the north some time after Henry II took Eleanor back to England in the summer of 1174; cf. Parry, p. 16, and William Nitze in Cross and Nitze, *Lancelot and Guenevere* (Chicago, 1930), pp. 68, 97.

[11] On the Arthurian background to the water bridge, etc., see Helaine Newstead, *Bran the Blessed* (New York, 1939), pp. 141-142 and note 21, in which the close connection between the material in *Lancelot* and *De Amore* is pointed out.

[12] Joseph Bédier, *op. cit.*, II, 194 ff., uses the following "versions primaires" for his reconstruction of the "archetype" (again the dates are subject to controversy): (1) the fragment by Béroul, ca. 1165; (2) the fragments by Thomas of Britain, ca. 1170; (3) the version of Eilhart von Oberg, ca. 1190-1200; (4) the French prose *Tristan*, ca. 1230; and (5) the *Folie Tristan*, after 1150. The enormous popularity of this story (see Holmes, p. 184 and references) in the last half of the twelfth century supports the notion of its attendant influence.

subsequent to Iseult's return to Mark. As Gertrude Schoepperle Loomis demonstrated in her study of the legend,[13] the second part, the flight to the forest, is the development of an elopement theme very popular with the Irish, and the third is a pastiche of the love adventures found in French folk poems like the *pastourelles* and *chansons de mal mariée,* combined with the love service of the Provençal courtly lyric. These last two parts contain none of the distinctive elements (unless it be Iseult of Brittany) which have immortalized the Tristan story. It is the first part, divested of the folklore paraphernalia of dragons, rudderless boats, and magic potions, that presents the adulterous triangle of uncle and nephew in conflict over the wife.

Joseph Bédier recognized that the adulterous triangle at the base of the Tristan story is from Celtic sources,[14] but he did not attach any particular significance to it. "Peut-elle," he asked of the story, "avoir été conçue par un peuple qui a considéré le mariage comme le plus soluble des liens?" His explanation, that greatness was conferred upon a typical romantic episode in a saga of a Celtic hero by some unknown French genius who engrafted upon it the "idea" of the eternal struggle between love and law,[15] is no doubt partly true. But there is a further explanation which may account for the unusual importance of the adultery in this particular Celtic story.

Let us examine the evidence. Originally Mark had no intention of marrying. Tristan, his nephew, was his heir apparent.[16] Persuaded by his barons to take a wife, Mark sent Tristan to secure her. Tristan and Iseult returned as lovers, but made no effort to avert Iseult's marriage to Mark.[17] Tristan and Iseult continued their liaison for an indeterminate period before they were suspected, and there is no suggestion that after the marriage night Iseult avoided Mark.[18] When, eventually, the barons suspected the lovers' guilt, Mark obstinately refused to believe it.[19] This first part of the romance ends with the lovers flight after Mark has been finally convinced by the blood on the queen's bed and the footprint in the flour. Does it not appear that, in the absence of the barons, who had instigated the marriage in the first place to insure a legitimate, patrilineal succession, the king, his nephew heir, and the queen might have settled into some sort of amicable, polyandrous relationship? Viewed in this light, the tragedy of Tristan and Iseult in the early versions is not so much the result of a clash between the uncle and nephew as between uncle and nephew on the one hand and Andret and the

[13] *Tristan and Isolt* (London, 1913), I, 120 ff.; II, 393 ff.
[14] Bédier, II, 115, 159.
[15] *Ibid.*, II, 166 ff.
[16] *Ibid.*, II, 213.
[17] *Ibid.*, II, 165-166.
[18] *Ibid.*, II, 240.
[19] *Ibid.*, II, 245, in Eilhart's version.

barons on the other, the former representing the matrilineal system of kinship and inheritance and the latter the patrilineal system.[20]

It is no accident, then, that Tristan (Drystan ab Tallwch in the *Mabinogion*) is to be identified with *Drest filius Talorgen* who reigned over the Picts from A.D. 780 to 785.[21] Among the Picts down to the ninth century the sister's son inherited the throne, after the brothers of the Pictish ruler. As a result, the king was not allowed to marry.[22] This would explain the relationship between Mark and Tristan before Mark's marriage. There is no suggestion by Bede, who confirms the matrilineal selection of Pictish kings in his own day,[23] that Pictish society was characterized by polyandry;[24] but a series of observations[25] beginning with Caesar in 55 B.C., coming down through Strabo in the first century,[26] Dion Cassius in the third, Jerome in the fourth, to an interpolation in the *Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium* of Julius So-

[20] Although I would not argue that Chrétien was aware of the cultural backgrounds of the Tristan story, I find very interesting the two passages in *Cligés* in which first Fenice (lines 3180 ff.) and then Cligés' servant Jehan (lines 6570 ff.) denounce the Emperor for marrying and thus breaking his oath that his nephew would succeed him. "Ja de moi ne puisse anfes nestre, / Par quoi il soit deseritez," vows Fenice (lines 3192-93).

[21] Bédier, II, 105 ff.; G. S. Loomis, II, 268. The identification was first made by H. Zimmer, "Zur Namenforschung in den altfranzösischen Arthurepen," *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Litteratur*, XIII (1891), 73. For discussion of the name from the linguistic standpoint, see K. H. Jackson in *The Problem of the Picts*, ed. F. T. Wainwright (Edinburgh, 1955), pp. 140, 163-164.

[22] William O. Farnsworth, *Uncle and Nephew in the Old French Chansons de Geste* (New York, 1913), p. 230 and references.

[23] Charles Plummer, ed., *Venerabilis Baedae Historiam Ecclesiasticam Gentis Anglorum* (Oxford, 1896), Lib. I, cap. ii (I, 12). See also the references in Plummer's notes (II, 8) indicating that the matrilineal selection of Pictish kings continued at least until the accession to the Pictish throne of the Scottish King Kenneth MacAlpin in A.D. 848. The Pictish system was *matrilineal* not *matriarchal*, i.e., rule was in the hands of males who traced their succession from mother to daughter.

[24] This argument was put forward by J. F. McLennan, *Studies in Ancient History* (London, 1876), pp. 145 ff. McLennan's conclusions have been frequently questioned, but they are tentatively supported in the most recent study of the Picts, by Jackson and Wainwright, *op. cit.*, p. 27 and note.

[25] H. Zimmer, "Das Mutterrecht der Picten," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte*, XIV (1893), 209-240, brings together most of the linguistic and literary evidence concerning the Pictish succession. His conclusions are not materially different from Wainwright's (pp. 25-28, etc.). Students of archaeology (e.g., T. C. Lethbridge, *The Painted Men*, New York, 1954, pp. 72, etc.; Wainwright, Chaps. II-V) can throw little light on the social organization of the Picts.

[26] *The Geography of Strabo*, trans. H. L. Jones (London, 1923), II, 259: "Besides some small islands round about Britain, there is also a large island, Ierne, which stretches parallel to Britain on the north... Concerning this island I have nothing certain to tell, except that its inhabitants are more savage than the Britons, since they are man-eaters as well as herb-eaters, and since, further, they count it an honorable thing, when their fathers die, to devour them, and openly to have intercourse, not only with other women, but also their mothers and sisters; but I am saying this only with the understanding that I have no trustworthy witnesses for it."

linus, dated about A.D. 610,[27] all testify to what appeared (at least to Roman observers) to be the absence of regular marriage and the practice of promiscuous cohabitation among the Pictish inhabitants of Britain. Caesar's statement applied evidently to all classes of a barbaric, painted people living inland off the southern coast of England: "Uxores habent deni duodenique inter se communis, et maxime fratres cum fratribus parentesque cum liberis; sed qui sunt ex eis nati eorum habentur liberi quo primum virgo quaeque deducta est."[28] The Solinus interpolation six centuries later refers to the kings of the islands off the Scottish coast: "nulla illi femina datur propria, sed per vicissitudines, in quamcunque commotus sit, usuariam sumit, unde ei nec votum nec spes conceditur liberorum."[29]

It would appear that, during the five centuries intervening between Caesar's account and the Solinus interpolation, the matrilineal Picts had been pushed back by the patrilineal Celts into the northernmost mountains and the islands of Britain and largely absorbed in Ireland.[30] After Ireland was Christianized by St. Patrick in the fourth century, the only relics of Pictish customs were the shocking behavior of Queen Medb, Princess Findabair, and the other ladies in the heroic cycles of Ulster and Connaught.[31] But matrilineal selection of kings survived in northern Britain for three centuries after its Christianization by St. Columba in the sixth century; and in the seventh century the promiscuous domestic arrangements of its kings were still worthy of comment.

It may be that by this time and afterwards such domestic irregularity was confined to royalty as a feature of the matrilineal system of royal succession,[32] just as, for different reasons, the Ptolemies had

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[27] Zimmer, "Des Mutterrecht," pp. 226-227 and references.

[28] *Gallic Wars*, ed. Renatus du Pontet (Oxford, n.d.), V, xiv.

[29] C. Julii Solini, *Collectania Rerum Memorabilium*, ed. T. Mommsen (1895), p. 219: in Tyle (the Isle of Man) "utuntur feminis vulgo: certum matrimonium nulli."

[30] This view of the Picts as the pre-Celtic, non-Indo-European inhabitants of Britain who were displaced by the Celts who were in turn displaced by the Angles and Saxons is Zimmer's (*passim*). Wainwright is less definite. He does not deal with the referent of Caesar's statement; but he does confirm Zimmer's hypothesis to the extent of allowing that "the general implication at present seems to be that there was at least a strong non-Celtic element in Pictland" (pp. 27-28).

[31] See the description of the behavior of the Irish heroines in the appendix to Zimmer's "Das Mutterrecht" (pp. 238-240). Subsequently Zimmer gave a fuller account of the sexual freedom enjoyed—and employed—by Irish heroines, "Der kulturgeschichtliche Hintergrund in den Erzählungen der alten irischen Heldensage," *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Berlin, 1911), pp. 177 ff. He explains this immorality as a debasement of the matriarchal customs of the original inhabitants who were only gradually assimilated to the more puritanical "Aryan" ways.

[32] As Wainwright points out (p. 27 and references), the *Pictish Chronicle* and other British sources are concerned only or primarily with kings. There is no evidence after the classical references that the matrilineal system applied throughout the social structure.

earlier married their own sisters and later European monarchs were to be allowed to marry within the bounds of consanguinity. This would explain the fact that courtly adultery with Tristan and Lancelot involves royalty, in contrast to Ovid's freedwomen and the troubadour's countesses. Furthermore, the practice of exogamy (the Pictish princesses' custom of marrying a stranger from another tribe),[33] which likewise continued into the ninth century, would help explain the vagueness about Tristan's father, as well as about the parentage of many other Arthurian heroes; and the matriarchal implications of the system in general would reinforce the high place of women in the courtly tradition and help to account for the persistent theme of the knight errant who wanders into a far country, by brave deeds wins the hand of the king's daughter, and thus succeeds to the throne.

Although Pictish society might provide us with a setting in which ceremonial adultery was socially acceptable, it is still a long step from Scotland in the ninth century to Champagne in the twelfth. We have no evidence that anything but Tristan's name was Pictish, and his story as we now have it is laid in Cornwall. But it is actually more difficult to imagine Tristan merely a name coming south in search of a story than to believe that the tradition of his polyandrous relations with his uncle and aunt, and all that this implied about folkways which may once have extended throughout the British Isles or beyond,[34] was in fact what kept his name alive.

If such a tradition did exist, we can well understand why the patrilineal Christian Celts of the south would have disapproved of both the matrilineal and polyandrous systems that Tristan represented. Hence, when they adapted the story to a Cornish setting, Mark became king in his own right (but observe that Iseult's husband was to have been king of Ireland); the uncle and nephew became rivals instead of cooperating senior and junior kings; and the polyandrous domestic arrangement was attributed to a supernatural agency. Even so, enough of the old tradition may have survived to give the Tristan story a significance quite unlike that of classical or other Celtic love stories.

The traditions underlying the love of Lancelot and Guinevere are more nearly akin to the loose moral code of the Irish cycles than to the cultural background of *Tristan*. Nevertheless, certain Pictish associa-

[33] Wainwright, p. 28; McLennan, pp. 101-104; Hyde Clarke, "The Picts and Pre-Celtic Britain," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, n.s., III (1886), 247 ff.

[34] Farnsworth, note 22 above, and A. W. Aaron, *Traces of Matriarchy in Germanic Hero-Lore* (Madison, 1920), summarize the literary evidence. Their bibliographies include most of the standard anthropological works to their time. The relics of the matrilineal and matriarchal systems among the Celts are summarized by Henri Hubert, *The Greatness and Decline of the Celts*, rev. ed. (London, 1934), pp. 203-205.

tions may be discernible. Jessie Weston long ago suggested, and R. S. Loomis has recently argued, that Guinevere's original lover and rescuer in the abduction plot was Arthur's nephew Gawain,[35] who in Chrétien's *Lancelot* starts out with the king to rescue Guinevere, accompanies Lancelot through many of his adventures, and eventually brings the queen back to court alone, while Lancelot languishes in prison. From Geoffrey of Monmouth we learn that Gawain was the son of Loth, whom Arthur made ruler of Lothian in southern Scotland, at the same time that "Gunhpuar" (Gunuasius, Gonway) was king of the Orkneys.[36] In later tradition Loth is himself king of the Orkneys.[37] Lothian is near the heart of the supposed Pictland,[38] and the Orkneys are islands off the northern coast of Scotland of the sort whose kings' domestic irregularities the Solinus interpolator commented on in the seventh century. Furthermore, the characteristic of waxing and waning strength by which Gawain has been identified as a Celtic solar deity[39] is ascribed (inversely, to be sure) to the Picts on the Orkneys: "These islands were first inhabited by the Picts (*Peti*) and the Papae. Of these, one race, the Picts, little exceeded pigmies in stature; they did marvels, in the morning and in the evening, in building [walled] towns, but at mid-day they entirely lost their strength, and lurked through fear in little underground houses."[40] Even if the identification of a Pictish Gawain as Guinevere's first lover is not accepted, we have in Geoffrey the tradition of Guinevere's adultery with Gawain's brother Modred.[41] In the tradition of Modred's incestuous begettal by Arthur upon his sister, it might be that the matrilineal and patrilineal traditions (in *Tristan* represented by Tristan and Andret) come together. As Ar-

[35] Jessie L. Watson, *The Legend of Sir Gawain* (London, 1897), pp. 76 ff.; R. S. Loomis, *The Arthurian Tradition and Chrétien de Troyes* (New York, 1949), pp. 194, 200.

[36] *The Historia Regum Britanniae*, ed. Acton Griscom (London, 1929), pp. 444-445. Loomis suggests (pp. 192 ff.) that Lancelot himself is to be identified with Lot, who is in turn to be identified with the Celtic god Lug. The first half of this suggestion would support the Pictish hypothesis.

[37] In Lovelich's *Merlin* (EETS, ES, XCIII, 1904), lines 6048, 6065, etc.; Malory's *Morte Darthur*, ed. Strachey (London, 1899), I, ii, p. 27, etc.

[38] The historic southern boundary of the Pictish kingdom is the Forth-Clyde line in northern Britain, but there is a strong twelfth-century tradition of Picts in Galloway (which Wainwright, pp. 34 ff., is inclined to dismiss as a myth). J. S. P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain* (Berkeley, 1950), p. 12, locates Lothian between the Tweed and the Forth, east of Galloway and directly south of the historic boundary. Gawain himself is sometimes associated with Galloway; J. D. Bruce, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance* (Baltimore, 1928), II, 98-99. On the part that these northern provinces play in the various versions of *Tristan* see Bédier, II, 108-110.

[39] First by Gaston Paris, "Romans en vers de la Table Ronde," *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, XXX (1888), 36.

[40] *Historia Norwegiae*, quoted by Wainwright, p. 35.

[41] *Historia Regum Britanniae*, p. 496. Miss Weston would identify Modred with Gawain; *The Legend of Sir Lancelot* (London, 1901), p. 109.

thur's nephew and son, Modred stood to inherit by both traditions; and, when he undertook to usurp the throne, he took Guinevere as a perquisite of office.

One of the puzzling aspects of the adultery of Guinevere has been that, in spite of her behavior, Chrétien and the compilers of the French prose cycles, even the aggressively moral author of *Perceval li Gallois*, all extol her as the noblest of queens and the best of women, morally superior to Arthur.[42] Miss Weston suggested a lapse in the tradition of her adultery as a way to explain this approval: that the primitive tradition of her adultery represented by Geoffrey and in Celtic legend[43] did not pass over into France; that her character was there rehabilitated; and that the Lancelot love story was then created out of whole cloth under the influence of the courtly tradition and the popularity of *Tristan*. There is an a priori unlikelihood of a tradition's lapsing and recurring in so nearly identical a form. If the Guinevere-Arthur-Lancelot (*vice* Gawain-Modred) triangle might be supposed, like that in *Tristan*, to retain vestiges of Pictish polyandry, Arthur's complacent blindness and Guinevere's untarnished character require no explanation. Indeed, if a Pictish cultural tradition in which adultery might appear to be approved is preserved more clearly in the story of Tristan and Iseult, the attitude of approval itself is preserved more clearly in the stories of the loves of Guinevere.

I have tried not to belabor a hypothesis whose tenuousness I well recognize, but whose parts seem to me to hang together well enough to warrant consideration. We return now to the question of whether the favorable attitude towards adultery displayed in *Tristan* and *Lancelot* can have had any bearing on *De Amore* and the subsequent tradition of courtly adultery. Without asserting anything more than propinquity and the common impulse that appears to be behind them as evidence for the influence of the attitude towards adultery in the two romances upon that in *De Amore*, let me turn the question around. If not this, what other influence might have led Marie and her two authors to adopt a favorable attitude towards adultery? The answer has generally been Ovid and the poems of the troubadours, and behind these life in the feudal castle. More recently efforts have been made to read

[42] Chrétien, *Perceval*, ed. Potvin (Mons, 1866-71), lines 8176 ff.: high praise by Gawain for Guinevere's character. Prose *Livre de Lancelot*, ed. Sommer, *Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances* (Washington, 1908-11), III, 29: "Mais riens ne monta la biaute a la ualour que ele auoit. Car che fu de toutes dames la plus preus & la plus vaillans." The reaction of the queen to Arthur's seduction by the false Guinevere (IV, 68-71) shows something of her moral superiority. The reaction of the populace to Arthur's command that the queen be burned when taken with Lancelot shows her continuing popularity (VI, 279-280).

[43] John Rhys, *Studies in the Arthurian Legend* (Oxford, 1891), Chap. III, points out that Guinevere has been traditionally regarded as a loose woman among the Celts. This reaction to her polyandrous situation would parallel the Celtic disapproval of Tristan and Iseult.

De Amore and *Tristan* on an allegorical or psychoanalytical level, and to assert that their subject is really the debate between the body and the soul.[44] None of these explanations offers as good grounds for condoning a continuing liaison as does Pictish polyandry, farfetched as that may seem.

First the matter of the French or Provençal cultural background. Since the thirteenth century, efforts have been made to explain the adultery in courtly love by reference to the lives of the authors who wrote about it and the social conditions of the day in which they wrote. The thirteenth-century *vidas* (lives) and *razos* (explications) attached to the troubadour lyrics were the first such efforts. These were embellished in the sixteenth century by Jean de Nostredame.[45] In the nineteenth century Claude Fauriel and Vernon Lee described courts of love and Provençal castle life.[46] More recently Amy Kelly has brilliantly recreated the setting in which Andreas may have produced his treatise.[47] But the objection to these arguments from contemporary continental social conditions has been well summed up by Alfred Jeanroy, speaking of the troubadour lyrics:

> Loin de s' expliquer par les conditions où elle naquit, elle semble en contradiction absolue avec ces conditions. Éclose dans une société profondément christianisée, où la morale la plus pure est prêchée par un clergé tout puissant qui en surveille étroitement la pratique, où les liens de famille sont très forts, où la loi civile fait à la femme une situation des plus humbles, elle ignore ou foule aux pieds les conventions sociales aussi bien que l'esprit de l'Évangile, chante un amour coupable, adultère au moins dans ses aspirations, et ne chante que lui.[48]

Adultery no doubt existed in mediaeval French society, as in other societies, but there is nothing in the moral, legal, or economic conditions to suggest that it was approved. The most that can be said of life in the feudal court is that it would have provided an avid audience for a literary convention which approved adultery. That it cannot be credited with creating such a convention is evidenced by the way in which the approval was tempered from the first by practical and moral considerations. Neither Andreas nor Chrétien was really happy with his momentary assertion of the convention. In Book III Andreas reversed himself by summing up the commonplace arguments against adulterous love, beginning "For God hates, and in both testaments commands the

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[44] Robertson, note 5, above; and Denis de Rougemont, *Love in the Western World*, trans. Belgion (New York, 1940), who discerns in the Tristan story the eternal struggle between Eros and Thanatos.

[45] See the history of Provençal studies in Alfred Jeanroy's *La Poésie lyrique des Troubadours* (Paris, 1934), I, 1-44.

[46] C. C. Fauriel, *History of Provençal Poetry*, trans. Adler (New York, 1860), pp. 308-350; Vernon Lee [Violet Paget], "Mediaeval Love," *Euphorion* (London, 1899), p. 350. The latter is the basis for Jeanroy's description, *op. cit.*, I, 93, and that of C. S. Lewis in *The Allegory of Love* (London, 1936), p. 62.

[47] See note 10 above.

[48] Jeanroy, I, 62.

punishment of, those whom he sees engaged in the works of Venus outside the bonds of wedlock or caught in the toils of any sort of passion,"[49] and ending with a familiar monkish antifeminist tirade. After *Lancelot*, Chrétien returned to a romance about married love in *Yvain*, and to an idealized quest in *Perceval*. The cult of adultery was never really accepted in the tradition of the romances which were closest to the actual social conditions.[50] Where it was accepted, in the allegorical tradition of Guillaume de Lorris, Dante, and Petrarch, it was at once made Platonic; and in the tradition of the Provençal fabliaux-romances (for example *Castia-gilos* and *Flamenca*), Jean de Meun, and Boccaccio it was satirized and moralized.

The troubadour lyric, which Jeanroy found "adultère . . . dans ses aspirations," is necessarily unsatisfactory ground in which to search for evidence of the cult of adultery. This is in the nature of the genre, which expresses emotions without necessarily detailing the circumstances which give rise to them. We know very little about the background of the poems. In the first place, from motives of prudence or practicality, the poets generally employed poetic pseudonyms. To cite a familiar example, Bernart de Ventadour calls his ladies "Bel-Vezer," "Cortes," "Conort," "Aziman," and "Tristan,"[51] but only twice in the forty-five poems that have come down to us does he designate the recipient of his homage, when he has

> Huguet, mos cortes messatgers,
> chantatz ma chanso volonters
> a la rëina dels Normans
> (Appel, p. 197)

and again

> Lo vers mi porta, Corona,
> lai a midons a Norbona.
> (Appel, p. 197)

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[49] Parry, p. 187; Pagès, p. 162: "Odit namque Deus et utroque iussit testamento puniri, quos extra nuptiales actus agnoscit Veneris operibus obligari vel quocunque voluptatis genere detineri."

[50] Sarah F. Barrow, *The Medieval Society Romances* (New York, 1924), p. 33: the French and English "romancers generally prefer *fine amor* free from the adulterous taint condoned and legalized by Andreas." Myrrha Lot-Borodine, *Trois essais sur Lancelot* (Paris, 1919), p. 30: "A l'exception des romans de Tristan qui forment un groupe à part et dont l'inspiration est autre, le 'roman d'adultère' n'apparait que très rarement dans notre vieille littérature . . . Le 'conte' de Chrétien reste donc presque la seule œuvre de son espèce, la seule qui rende l'esprit provençal[?] avec cette vigueur et cette force de conviction." H. J. Weigand, *Three Chapters on Courtly Love* (Chapel Hill, 1957), p. 34, has shown in detail how in Wolfram's *Parzival* "All love relationships tend to find their consummation in marriage—this in sharpest contrast to Andreas' doctrine." Otis H. Green, "Courtly Love in the Spanish *Cancioneros*," *PMLA*, LXVI (1940), 283 ff., has noted that in fiction the heroine is usually unmarried and that in the lyrics the motif of adultery is likely to be conventional at best. Such observations on the rarity of the adulterous motif could be easily multiplied.

[51] See the register of proper names in Carl Appel, ed., *Bernart von Ventadour* (Halle, 1915), pp. 395-396.

Although these are both obviously formal dedications, the first has been used as the basis for the tradition of Bernart's devotion to Eleanor of Aquitaine.[52] A second example is that of Jaufré Rudel and the countess of Tripoli, in whose arms he is supposed to have died. The "Amors de terra lonhdana" of whom he writes so movingly is never identified in the poems, and her identification with any known countess of Tripoli has been demonstrated as impossible. The references in Rudel's poems have, in fact, such a vague and spiritual quality that some critics have suggested that his lady is the Blessed Virgin herself.[53] The troubadour poems were evidently baffling even to the jongleurs who sang them in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and who consequently invented the quaint and fantastic accounts of the loves of the troubadours for their noble mistresses—Peire Vidal in his wolf skin, Seremonde eating the heart of Guillem de Cabestanh—to satisfy their hearers' curiosity.[54] Both their chronology and their lack of authenticity suggest that the *vidas* and *razos* are more likely to have been influenced by the cult of adultery as asserted by Andreas than vice versa.

There is almost as little internal as there is external evidence concerning whether the "kernel of courtly love, the subjection of the lover to the lady's will," as it appears in the troubadour poems, is licit or illicit. On occasion it appears to be clearly illicit: the *aube* regularly ends an assignation and usually mentions "lo fol gelos," the husband;[55] Jeanroy cites three *chansons* in which the husband is mentioned;[56] I have come across one *tenson* in which the merits of free love and married love are inconclusively debated;[57] in the poems the lady is usually referred to as *domna* (which may be simply a title of respect).[58] Those who known the material better than I could no doubt add instances in which the poetry "chante un amour coupable," as Jeanroy observed; but that it "ne chante que lui" simply cannot be proved. The sentiments expressed by the great majority of *chansons d'amour* could reflect quite as accurately the so-called innocent passion of Romeo and Juliet as the so-called adulterous passion of Tristan and Iseult.

Three typical stanzas from a lyric by Peire Vidal will serve as illus-

[52] On the improbability of this tradition see Jeanroy, *La Poésie lyrique des Troubadours*, I, 151.

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 115. J. J. Chaytor, *The Troubadours* (Cambridge, 1912), p. 92, and Jean Audiau, *Nouvelle Anthologie des Troubadours* (Paris, 1928), p. 23, suggest that Rudel's lady is the Virgin.

[54] Cf. the conclusions of the latest editors, Boutière and Schutz, *Biographies des troubadours* (Columbus, 1950), p. xvi.

[55] Jeanroy, II, 295, 339, lists only eleven of this type extant in Provençal.

[56] *Ibid.*, II, 109.

[57] In Audiau, *Nouvelle Anthologie*, p. 197, along with others on various topics.

[58] E.g., in the Provençal poem on Boece, Philosophy is called variously "una donzella" and "la dompna." Karl Bartsch, *Chrestomathie Provençale* (6th ed., Marburg, 1904), 6/16, 26; 8/25, 26; 20/16.

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tration.[59] The third comes as near as being sensual as the Provençal poet is likely to come:

Amors, pres sui de la bera,
Quar m'etz tan de mala guiza;
Qu'eu cugei m'acsetz conquiza
La gensor e la plus gaia
Del mon, mas no·us platz qu'eu l'aia.
Per qu'eu morrai dezesperatz,
Amors, et er tortz e peccatz,
Si d'aquest vostre benvolen
Non avetz calque chauzimen.

Love, I am near the grave because you are so cruel to me. I think that you have made the most beautiful and gayest in the world conquer me, but it does not please you that I should have her. Therefore, I shall die despairing, Love, and that will be wrong and evil, if you do not take pity on your servant.

Ja, s'eu saupes, non amera,
Que m'en prezes d'aital guiza,
Qu'er à ma voluntat priza
Cilh qu'es orgolhoz' e gaia
Vas mi, e de mal qu'en traia
No·lh cal, ans m'a mes en tal latz,
Que jois ni deportz ni solatz
D'autra no'm don' esbaudimen,
Ni de leis nulh joi non aten.

I would never have loved if I had known that it would go this way. For she who is proud towards me has taken all my will; she is indifferent towards whatever ills I suffer. She has me in such bonds that the diversions and solaces of anyone else do not please me, and I attend upon no one but her.

Qu'eu vi ja l'ora qu'ilh era
Franca e de bona guiza
E sa boca gent apriza
En parlar paraula gaia,
Vas bon pretz fina e veraia,
Sos cors adregz e gen formatz,
D'ensenhamens e de beutatz,
Que anc nulhs hom no vi tan gen
Ni ab tan bel captenemen.

I have seen the time when she was frank and pleasant, and her mouth in the habit of saying pleasant things, when she recognized nobility and sincerity. Her body handsome and well formed, well trained and beautiful; no one has ever seen one handsomer or of better carriage.

Despair, hope, admiration, longing, and the poetry which seeks to convey such emotions come near being amoral. Only the condition of the lovers and the social context can determine whether they are vice or virtue.

Since the evidence in the Provençal lyrics is so vague, some scholars have tried to reinforce the supposedly adulterous coloring of these

[59] *Les Poésics de Peire Vidal*, ed. J. Anglade (Paris, 1923), pp. 98-100.

poems by pointing to a more distant cult of free love among the Hispano-Arabic poets who may have influenced the troubadours.[60] But this tradition is equally hard to pin down. Occasionally in the Arabic there does seem to be a poem that sounds something of the anguished cry of the troubadour;[61] but, so far as I have been able to discover in the translations, it never rests on any suggestion of adultery. The object of the Arabic poet's affection is usually a ǧariya (a female slave), sometimes a wife (one of several), and occasionally a ǧulam (slave boy). Some pieces may be homosexual.[62] The celebrated *Tawq* of Ibn Hazm, whose analysis of the nature and sentiments of love has been compared to that of Andreas,[63] actually has a rather different flavor, concluding, as it does, with chapters on the contentment of continued union and the pains of separation, which suggest clearly the satisfactions of stable and legitimate union.[64] Ibn Hazm is even more explicit in his later *Kitab al-ahláq*, where, although the description of jealousy is not unlike that which Andreas attributes to the courtly lover, it is attributed to the husband and specifically cited as a deterrent to adulterous desire.[65] The harem culture of Moslem Spain which lies behind these writings seems an even less likely source for a cult of adultery than Provençal castle life.

In the absence of satisfactory evidence that troubadour or Arabic poetry celebrated sensual adulterous love, Gaston Paris and others[66] have pointed to Ovid as the influence which led Marie, Chrétien, and Andreas to enunciate their doctrine. It is certainly true that Ovid's influence is more apparent in the psychology of Chrétien's romances and in both the form and matter of Andreas' book than in anything in the south.[67] However, the *Ars amatoria* was no new discovery in the twelfth century, and the view of Gaston Paris presents difficulties: "Si l'amour qu'enseigne Ovide ne ressemble guère à l'amour chevaleresque et courtois, il a cependant avec celui-ci un point commun, et un point fort essentiel: l'un et l'autre sont nécessairement des amours illégitimes,

[60] E.g., Christopher Dawson, *Medieval Essays* (New York, 1924), pp. 226-227, etc. The courtly situation in Spain as Dawson and others depict it is so out of keeping with the Koran and Moslem culture elsewhere that it can hardly be credited.

[61] A. R. Nykl, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry and Its Relations with the Old Provençal Troubadours* (Baltimore, 1946); note particularly the poem from the tenth century by Ibn Farağ, p. 44.

[62] Nykl, pp. 59, 102, 167, 210.

[63] Parry, Introduction, pp. 8-11.

[64] Nykl, pp. 95-98.

[65] Nykl, p. 99; Parry, pp. 102-103, 105-107.

[66] Particularly Sidney Painter, *French Chivalry* (Baltimore, 1940), who argues strenuously (pp. 114 ff.) that the troubadour lyrics were conventional and Platonic and that the notion of sexual consummation was introduced in the north under the influence of Ovid.

[67] Painter, *op. cit.*; F. E. Guyer, "The Influence of Ovid on Chrestien de Troyes" (University of Chicago dissertation, 1921); Nitze, *Lancelot and Guenevere*, pp. 88 ff.

en dehors du mariage."[68] This equating of mere skirt chasing with the enduring loves of kings and queens seems to me to present the adulterous aspect of courtly love in a totally wrong light. Ovid's love is that which Father Denomy has described as at the opposite pole from courtly love, evil and impure, founded on sensuality for its own sake, faithless, promiscuous, and mercenary.[69] None of these epithets can be properly applied to the loves described by Chrétien or Andreas. Their courtly ideal resembles more closely the great tragic loves of the classics—Paris and Helen, Antony and Cleopatra. But even here there is a difference, for these are stories of elopements and desertions, of the forgoing of all public and private responsibilities for the sake of love. By contrast, the very hallmark of the courtly situation as it evolved with *Tristan* and *Lancelot* is that it is thoroughly compatible with both public and private responsibility. In each case we have the spineless uncle king unable to defend either his land or his wife, and the nephew lover who comes forward to do both. It is by this implicitly polyandrous tradition rather than as "Ovid misunderstood" that Andreas' ritual of a continuing liaison decorously maintained within the family circle can best be explained.

Influences upon literature are not, of course, mutually exclusive. Undoubtedly life in the feudal castle, troubadour gallantry, Ovidian psychology, and the Manichean tinge of mediaeval Christianity are all ingredients in the elixir of courtly love. But these influences do not satisfactorily explain the appearance in an aggressively monogamous and moralistic society of a literary convention condoning courtly adultery. Furthermore, these influences are not needed to explain the attitude towards adultery in the two earliest romances condoning it, in which it evidently emanated from an accepted social system. We may hypothesize, therefore, that, instead of becoming popular because they fit a preconceived Provençal or Ovidian doctrine of adultery, *Tristan* and *Lancelot* themselves created the doctrine which they were the first to embody. For Marie of Champagne and her contemporaries, as later for Dante's Francesca, these romances may have been the "Galeotto" which crystallized vaguely adulterous sentiments into an overt cult of adultery.

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[68] Gaston Paris, "Le Conte de la Charrette," *Romania*, XII (1883), 520.
[69] A. J. Denomy, *The Heresy of Courtly Love* (New York, 1947), p. 26.

BOOK REVIEWS

SUGGERIMENTI PER UNA LETTURA DI DANTE. By Rocco Montano. Naples: Conte Editore, 1956. 222 p.

Mr. Montano's book is a collection of essays, five long articles, and eight shorter pieces, reviews, and notes. The only essay previously unpublished is the first, "Del leggere Dante," in which Mr. Montano expounds his critical creed. Others, "Dante e l'estetica gotica," a study of the *Divine Comedy* in relation to mediaeval allegorism and poetics, "Lo stile comico di Dante e il canto dei barattieri," "Il 'folle volo' di Ulisse," and "La *Monarchia* e il pensiero politico di Dante" are attempts to work out the implications of his viewpoint.

The author's approach to Dante represents one of the most important trends of contemporary Dante scholarship, the attempt to study the *Divine Comedy* in the light of mediaeval aesthetic ideals and practices and to explore those principles of structure which govern the universe of the poem. It is thus equally removed from the purely "aesthetic" criticism of De Sanctis and Croce and the scholarly studies of Bruno Nardi or Auguste Renaudet, devoted to elucidating the doctrinal and philosophic passages of the poem or to interpreting Dante's thought on various questions.

I will reserve until later extended comment on the first essay, which raises critical problems of general importance, following a discussion of the other major essays.

"Dante e l'estetica gotica" is an interesting treatment of Dante's relation to mediaeval theories of allegory and poetics. Mr. Montano maintains, along with Charles Singleton and others, that the model of allegory which the *Comedy* imitates is theological, a fourfold allegory in which things and events are signs. It is not the twofold allegory of the poets in which the literal meaning of the poem is conceived to be an envelope for a moral truth. He also calls our attention to Dante's deep commitment to mediaeval rhetorical theory and its view of poetry as *scientia*. Hence, according to Mr. Montano, the poet's sense of the word as intrinsically beautiful or ugly, his "rationalism," linguistic virtuosity, and concern for the refinements of rhetorical technique. The author, however, is careful to point out that Dante transcends this mediaeval poetic and is profoundly imitative of classical models, especially in the structure and function of his similes.

This is a penetrating and perceptive essay, and Mr. Montano makes good critical use of his erudition. However, many Dante scholars will probably find his treatment of some vexed questions of Dante scholarship peremptory. Among these are the problem of whether the *Vita Nuova* is allegorical (the author claims that it is), the relations between that work and the *Convivio*, and whether Dante advances a theory of poetic inspiration. Mr. Montano decides that no such theory is to be found in Dante, and develops this point at greater length in a short review, "Pareri sul dolce stil nuovo." I think, however, that he confuses Dante's statements on the matter of inspiration with a romantic interpretation of those statements, and that he ignores the importance of Dante's adaptation of mediaeval theories of prophecy and mystical vision to the purpose of a *theory* of his poetic activity. Whether or not his experience of "dictation" was combined in practice with craftsmanship governed by canons of appropriateness between styles, techniques, and subject matter is an entirely different question. Rhetorical and inspirational interpretations of poetic creativity have often gone hand in hand in the history of poetry, however inconsistently.

In "Lo stile comico di Dante e il canto dei barattieri," the author studies Cantos XXI-XXIII of the *Inferno* as an example of the "mediaeval comic moment" of the poem. It is, so to speak, Dante's image of the Hell of the popular imagination, the comic as one of the numerous aspects of evil. Considering the *Comedy* from the point of view of synthesis of styles, Mr. Montano shows how the linguistic and stylistic doctrine of *De vulgari eloquentia* on a humble or "comic" style is applied in this sequence. He combines an acute analysis of the stylistic character of the barratry cantos with a full awareness of the moral significance of the imagery and similes Dante employs in this episode. While he is faithful to the linguistic and structural details of the episode, he never loses sight of its exemplaristic and moral character. Mr. Montano wisely rejects the temptation of autobiographical interpretation and insists that the poet's religious sentiment is always detached and austere. Neither passion nor the apparently autobiographical is ever displayed for its own sake; for the pilgrim's experience is always primarily moral and essentially impersonal. It reveals the nature of sin in a character and not "the character as such." The author's interpretation of this "Gothic" and grotesque moment of the *Comedy* seems to me the most convincing study in the book.

"Il 'folle volo' di Ulisse" is a long critique of the romantic interpretation of the Ulysses episode in the *Inferno*, an interpretation which makes the figure a kind of hero and which claims that Dante, consciously or not, exalted certain heroic values at the expense of the Christian judgment which places Ulysses where he is in Hell. Mr. Montano's point of departure is an essay of Bruno Nardi's (in *Dante e la cultura medievale*, Bari, 1949) in which Nardi maintained that this episode reveals a clash between the poet's admiration of Ulysses and Dante's judgment as theologian. The author attacks this and similar interpretations on the ground that they make the divine judgment unintelligible, the very judgment which, as always for Mr. Montano, is the key to interpreting the moral universe of the poem. For him, the journey of Ulysses was as futile an action as the obscene gesture of Vanni Fucci or the meaningless cry of Capaneus. Dante places Ulysses in Hell because he is an example of the sin of *curiositas*, the thirst for knowledge unchecked by the demands of morality, the desire for mere experience, and we must understand that the poet, if not the pilgrim, is repelled by that sin.

While there is no doubt that Dante the sinner-pilgrim glorifies Ulysses, if at all, only so that Dante the poet may condemn him, I would not conclude from this that the values of Vanni Fucci and Ulysses are the same. Sin is not only the dark negation of willful evil like thievery or treachery, but is also the perversion of a good, its misuse or "misordering." A St. Augustine may see all mortal sins as finally, in the eyes of God, equally monstrous; but the very point of having a system of punishments in the *Inferno* is that we are called upon to consider moral evil as something graded. Some admirable gifts of human nature may be employed in a sinful manner and be damnable, not in their origins but in their goals, and present us with a complex interweaving of worth and negation. This is not merely a question of making sin a simple matter of degree, as Mr. Montano seems to feel in rejecting S. Agliano's interpretation of Farinata ("La lettura del canto di Farinata di S. Agliano")—for degree becomes kind; a good, altered and corrupted by being out of place, loses its reference to the final good.

In his last essay, "La *Monarchia* e il pensiero politico di Dante," Mr. Montano, starting from a critique of G. Vinay's edition of Dante's *De Monarchia* (Florence, 1950), attacks those who consider that work to be "orthodox" and in harmony with the views of the relation between Church and Empire the poet advanced in the *Comedy*. He stresses, correctly in my opinion, the heterodox and Averroistic nature of Dante's thought in *De Monarchia* and the fact that Dante, beyond de-

limiting the roles of both institutions, makes the Empire a sacred and virtually sanctifying instrument. According to Mr. Montano, *De Monarchia* presents the most mystical possible view of politics, quite removed from the poet's opinions in the *Comedy*, where he freely recognized the interdependence of the temporal and spiritual orders. The author finds, therefore, a greater recognition of papal claims in the *Comedy*, and reads Marco Lombardo's speech in *Pur.*, XVI in a way that would make it conflict more sharply with the *Monarchia* than some scholars would admit. He denies that the reference to Church and Empire as "two suns" (*Pur.*, XVI, 108) has any relevance to the nature of the relationship between the two powers, and concludes by giving a "Catholic-Thomist" interpretation to Dante's final statements on this question.

The problem of Dante's changing views of the relation of church and state and the problem of his orthodoxy (the latter often erroneously related to the question of his Thomism) is too complex for discussion in this review. Another interpreter, faithful to the changes in Dante's thought, and also aware of the non-Thomistic, although "orthodox," character of his final statements, is Nancy Lenkeith (*Dante and the Legend of Rome*, London, 1952, especially Chap. III, "Jupiter and Justice"). While her account is not as well documented as one could wish, I believe that the main outlines of her interpretation are sound.[1]

Throughout the book Mr. Montano's critical fire is directed at Croce and De Sanctis and their followers for their unhistorical and "secular" reading of the *Divine Comedy*; to a considerable degree, this criticism is justified. For, whatever the merits of Croce's aesthetic may be, his practical criticism of the *Comedy* presents us with a work which is little more than a number of passages of extreme lyrical intensity set in the matrix of "unpoetic" discourses on obsolete philosophy and theology. De Sanctis, on the other hand, powerfully renders the great episodes and characters of the poem, and few later critics have been as sensitive to the way in which Dante can use a word or a phrase to bring his great creations to life; yet he removes the characters from the context of the poem and inevitably simplifies them morally. They are presented to us as embodiments of passions or sentiments, and we forget that they inhabit one or another of the three great realms of the beyond. Although I am inclined to be less severe than Mr. Montano on De Sanctis, I must acknowledge that he too finally gives us an anthologist's *Comedy*, a poem of peaks and valleys, the peaks brilliantly illuminated and the valleys covered in darkness.

Those scholars who have approached Dante through the disciplines of intellectual and cultural history have given us many valuable glosses on the text. The studies of Nardi, Reade, and numerous others have clarified difficult passages and placed Dante in relation to the intellectual and cultural climate of his time. While this is an indispensable propaedeutic for criticism, it is not criticism; and more remains to be done. Dante, after all, is a poet and handles ideas in a poet's way. They are part of the texture and structure of the poem itself and, while they are not its very flesh and substance, they are its nervous and circulatory system, the network of structure through which the poem is articulated. To study them as isolated statements may be to dismember the poem in as radical and unintelligible a manner as sectioning it into poetic and unpoetic passages.

[1] On Dante's "two suns" see the important and suggestive article of E. Kantorowicz, "Dante's 'Two Suns,'" *Semitic and Oriental Studies*, IX (1951), 217-231. E. Gilson (*Dante et la philosophie*, Paris, 1939) as well as Lenkeith, *op. cit.*, and Bruno Nardi (*Nel mondo di Dante*, Rome, 1944) have effectively disposed of the many attempts to make Dante a Thomist, if that word is to have any precise meaning at all.

Mr. Montano's "Del leggere Dante" calls for a new approach to Dante which might be described, in Miss Irma Brandeis' phrase, as "reading Dante whole," with special attention to the principles of structure which govern Dante's poetic universe. Further, he demands an historical reconstruction of the work in the light of mediaeval thought and culture as the indispensable prerequisite to the act of critical judgment and honest understanding. The unfurnished romantic or modern sensibility (they would seem to be the same for the author) can only falsify the poem for us, giving us merely a gallery of passions, characters, and charming similes, a set of emotional and sublime scenes set in the frame of an outmoded world view. For Mr. Montano, the act of historical reconstruction is not simply an act of erudition. Rather, such an act permits us to clarify our own idea of what poetry is, gives us insight into our own historically conditioned judgment, and frees us for a more comprehensive critical act.

This implies that we read the poem with full awareness that "the poet's religious consciousness is the unifying principle of the work," that we bring to our reading a thorough historical knowledge of the modes, forms, and aesthetic ideals which underlie it. We must come to the poem with our awareness heightened by a study of the *Summae* and the great cathedrals; for its true poetic is not, in the narrow sense of the word, literary (pp. 36-42). The key to its structure lies in that larger poetic which makes the *Summa theologiae* and the cathedral of Chartres imitations of universal history and nature as it was given to mediaeval culture. The poem is not governed by literary theories of allegory, but by the principles of mediaeval realism (p. 31), which state a real analogy between God and His creatures. It is a work of *exempla, figurae*, and epiphanies. The architecture of the poem is that of the real world of mediaeval thought, and like that world its events, characters, and landscape are not merely things but signs as well. Thus the characters in it are not only themselves but also representatives of their spiritual condition, good or bad.

It is also important to remember that Dante the pilgrim is a sinner—at least until he completes his purgation—and that his reactions are what they are precisely because he is a sinner. According to Mr. Montano, the modern-romantic sensibility mistakes the pilgrim's reactions for the whole truth about the characters and ignores the function of Dante's similes as moral icons. The purpose of the dramatic episodes in Hell is simply to give us another of sin's many faces (p. 13). However moved we may be by the Brunetto episode, we must understand that our pleasure in finding redeemable traits in the damned is utterly unmediaeval, that Dante and his contemporaries made clearer distinctions between the good and the bad and felt that an evil man is in some sense "a mass of sin and error." We must read the poem in the religious spirit in which it was written (p. 17). Indeed, we must read it as Christians (p. 45), in the light of the poet's sensibility and that of his era; and our critical task is to determine whether he has responded fully to the moral and imaginative possibilities of his time (p. 25). The fruit of all our scholarly effort should be to enable us to judge how, and to what degree, a work of art has corresponded to "the ideal of beauty that history is in the process of actualizing" and if it has truly and fully given voice to its own time (p. 26).

Such seem to be the main views of Mr. Montano, and with part of what he says few will disagree. Charles Singleton's studies of the principles of structure of the *Vita Nuova* and *Comedy*, derived from an intensive study of mediaeval culture, have given us fresh critical perspectives of the first importance. And certainly no one would argue the limitations of a critical procedure which divides the poem into poetic and unpoetic passages, or views Dante as another and greater

Theophrastus. Also, Mr. Montano's distinction between Dante the pilgrim-sinner, the "autonomous" character of the poem, and the poet who constructs the world the pilgrim is discovering is a fundamental critical distinction, and both Mr. Singleton and Francis Fergusson have made excellent use of it. Yet it seems to me that in principle, if not always in practice, Mr. Montano veers too much to the side of the "poet," who in this context is synonymous with God, the divine judgment which distributes the inhabitants of the poem to their proper places (cf. "Dante commentato da Sapegno," especially p. 186). In escaping from the sentimentalizing of De Sanctis and his followers, the author has, it seems to me, run to the opposite extreme. If we must see Brunetto as a mass of sin and error without redeeming traits because, presumably, Dante would have seen him that way, then we may be as false to the moral truth of the poem as the romantics.

In the first place I doubt that it is "mediaeval" to deny all worth to the damned. In fact, it seems like the Manichaean heresy to do so. Pure evil is nothing, so St. Augustine tells us, and even Lucifer himself, insofar as he has any being whatever, is to that degree good. The power of the Brunetto episode lies, in part at least, in the very tension between the spontaneous impulse of the finite consciousness of the pilgrim and his shock at the working of the divine judgment. We are, after all, sinners like the pilgrim and, perhaps, even like the poet, not as theologian but as author of the *Divine Comedy*. It is precisely in the apparent incommensurability between the divine and human judgment that the complexity of Dante's moral vision and the moral truth of the episode lies. It is the moral tension of the passage and not the judgment furnished by the divine *system* alone that moves us.

There is a sense in which Dante always remained a poet and therefore a sinner. The consciousness of a saint, in so far as he is saintly, is almost by definition unliterary, and the blessed in Heaven have no more need of literature than of food and drink. Dante must have remained fascinated to the end by the very diversity of experience that the mystic ignores. I am trying to suggest that the procedure of transferring to Dante the perceptions of a St. Thomas or of any other figure taken as some kind of mediaeval standard has its risks. Gravest among these is to simplify the moral vision of the Middle Ages, to imply that the men of that time were insensitive to moral paradox, to the antinomies present in any life of choice.

Furthermore, I am not sure what Mr. Montano means when he tells us that we cannot read the *Divine Comedy* with our modern sensibilities—out of the presuppositions of a secular culture. Where else can we begin? And can all the historical reconstruction in the world do more than refine the sensibilities we have and help us see how the poem does its work? In other words, can we delude ourselves into believing that we can ever read the *Comedy* in something we could accurately call a mediaeval manner? Perhaps all this is not what Mr. Montano means, but it seems to be what he says.

Again, I am not sure that I can understand what he means when he says that we must read the *Comedy* as Christians. What kind of Christians? The forms of piety are as variable as any other mode of feeling that history presents for our inspection; and it is well to remember that interest in the *Comedy* was less intense in the greatly religious age of Tridentine Catholicism than in some other, more secular, periods. Surely, what we need, in addition to a sympathetic insight into the past, is a mature moral vision rather than a specifically doctrinal one. We need to understand that we may be compelled to submit our judgments to a higher court, whether we call it Fate, Reality, or God, that our justice is not always its justice, and that there will always be times when to the human consciousness there will be a disproportion between guilt and retribution.

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Although Mr. Montano tries to avoid it, he seems to me to be perilously close to some form of aesthetic historicism, to the belief that a work of art is essentially the "life of our own past" (p. 40, "la nostra vita di ieri") and that its secret is somehow exhausted in an analysis of its relation to its own time, as if we could exclude the actualities of the work from our conception of the "time" and its "possibilities." Surely the critic must also address himself to what the work says to our own time. Otherwise he may imprison the work in the categories of history and reduce it to a document, to something merely typical. Of course, one of the good things about the historical reconstruction of the literature of the past is that it permits us to share more fully in a different set of values, to look at the world differently. But whether the locus of literary judgment and value is to be placed in this same act is another question entirely and one concerning which Mr. Montano is not at all clear.

We need to know many things about mediaeval culture to read Dante's great poem with the maximum understanding and pleasure and with a full appreciation of Dante's poetic greatness. And much of what we must know is "unliterary," like philosophy, cosmology, and history. In short we must learn the systems of the poem, its principles of structure, so that we can understand how we get from the beginning, through the middle, to the end, and where we have been once we have made the journey.

Mr. Montano is perfectly lucid and correct in his emphasis on the structure of the poem. Its structure is also function, so that the "thought" of the poem is as much poetry as any other element we can abstract from it. My only question concerns the extent to which the moral system of the poem can be isolated as its whole moral truth. As sinner, as penitent, and as the reconstituted natural man rising through the heavens, Dante never loses his wonder at the divine judgment. If Brunetto is unexpectedly in Hell, Manfred is surprisingly enough in Purgatory. And who could have imagined Ripheus in Paradise? Briefly, the poem imitates the ways of God even to imitating the ultimate inscrutability of his judgments. Dante's characters are all unique instances, they call for a unique response in each case, and they live in that truly literary realm where moral values intersect and where competing judgments vie with each other in their unsuccessful attempt to absorb the particular wholly.

Rather than asking us to read the poem like Christians, it seems to me that Mr. Montano is asking us to read it as God would read it. This is to simplify the poem, for it is only for God that the moral universe is simple. The pilgrim who travels through the poem is really learning a very important lesson in how to be morally solvent, how to do business with all of reality—including that aspect of it which is unredeemable, unchangeable, and incurable, with that part of the universe which declares that certain things are so whether we like them or not and whether we understand them or not.

It should be obvious that Mr. Montano's book is thought-provoking. Much of his extremity and ambiguity in matters of theory is belied by the sensitivity of his reading of some important passages in the *Comedy*. Some readers will find his essays too charged with the *odium philologicum*; but he is addressing himself to those who create the current literary climate in Italy and within the polemical conventions of Italian literary criticism. Like E. E. Stoll among the Shakespearians, to whose position Mr. Montano's bears some analogy, he has things to say and, even if we cannot always agree or understand, it is well that he says them forcefully enough to make us think.

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LEIBNIZ IN FRANCE FROM ARNAULD TO VOLTAIRE. A STUDY IN FRENCH REACTIONS TO LEIBNIZIANISM, 1670-1760. By W. H. Barber. New York: Oxford University Press, 1955. xi, 276 p.

The study of eighteenth-century international relations in intellectual matters is progressing steadily. Recent years have brought us Leland Thielemann's *The Tradition of Hobbes in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ann Arbor, 1950—microfilm) and Paul Vernière's two-volume *Spinoza et la pensée française avant la Révolution* (Paris, 1954). Now Mr. Barber presents a detailed examination of French reactions to a third great philosopher whose ideas were of tremendous importance to the writers of the Enlightenment. At the same time he points up some of the shortcomings of eighteenth-century French cosmopolitanism.

There was, as Mr. Barber demonstrates, a striking ambivalence in the impact of Leibnizian ideas in France. During Leibniz's lifetime the French saw in him primarily a critic of Cartesianism, while he was best remembered after his death as a theologian and as a speculative metaphysician whose outmoded system was to fall victim to the growing popularity of the empiricists. "Thus, while Leibniz appears as a critic of the old ways of thought, impressing upon the devotees of *a priori* argument the importance of experiment and observation, he is also, in relation to the new scientists, a man sunk deep in medieval conceptions, a weaver of metaphysical systems, a believer in the necessary unity of theology, philosophy, and science" (p. ix). By coming too late, when progress in science was changing man's ways of thinking, his lifelong attempt to reconcile the scholastic tradition with the new empirical method was doomed to failure. Yet Leibnizianism continued as a controversial issue in France long after the philosopher's death in 1716. This interest in his ideas, largely stimulated by foreign influences, provides another chapter in the history of the growing French awareness of literary and philosophical movements abroad.

Part I of this study examines Leibniz's personal contacts with France and, especially, with his great contemporaries, Arnauld, Malebranche, Bossuet, and Bayle. His relations with Arnauld centered around the metaphysical problems arising from the doctrines of the Eucharist held by the Catholic and Lutheran churches. Finding a solution which seemed to establish a sound rational basis for transubstantiation, Leibniz hoped to heal the schism and effect an ecclesiastical reunion. In some of the German's ideas (notably the thirteenth proposition of the *Discours de métaphysique*), Arnauld discovered very serious theological dangers involving complete fatalism. As a result of this "misinterpretation" of his logical proofs, Leibniz took care never again to state them publicly, so as to assure his own continued usefulness as a negotiator in the reunion of the churches. Thus it is that, throughout his correspondence with Bossuet beginning six years later (in 1692), Leibniz "expressed his [philosophical] views in a series of almost purely dogmatic statements, without giving any account of the reasons which may have led him to adopt them" (p. 23). His scientific reasons for opposing the Cartesian view of matter were evidently strong enough by themselves to win Bossuet's interest and sympathy; for in 1694 this most influential churchman in France was willing to forward to the *Journal des Savants* Leibniz's first philosophical treatise of any importance to be published in France, the *Système nouveau.*

The correspondence between Leibniz and Malebranche in 1676, and presumably also their conversation while Leibniz was in Paris, dealt mostly with the distinction between space and matter. "Much of Malebranche's thought appeals to him, in spite of its Cartesianism; their common approach to philosophical problems, their belief in the validity of systematic *a priori* reasoning, their concern for the reconciliation of philosophy and theology, all drew them together, though their views, when similar, were often differently derived" (p. 18). According to Mr. Barber,

Leibniz's personal contribution, as far as Malebranche is concerned, consisted in persuading the author of *La Recherche de la vérité* to modify and finally to abandon his Cartesian views on the laws of movement.

It was Pierre Bayle who had launched Leibniz's sustained attack against Cartesianism in France by printing one of his articles in the *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* for 1686. Ironically enough, it was Leibniz's desire to refute Bayle's discussion of the problem of evil in the *Dictionnaire historique* and to furnish a positive solution that led him to write his most widely known work, *Essais de Théodicée* (published in 1710). Mr. Barber points out that the essential difference between the two men's views on the subject of free will and the origin of evil lies in the degree to which they admit the importance of doubt or incomprehensibility in their outlook. While this was the predominant factor for Bayle (as it was to be for Voltaire), Leibniz considered it something to be minimized, even though it could not be completely eliminated from the picture. Here as elsewhere throughout the book, the author's lucid summaries of Leibniz's thought and of the position held by his adversary are of great help to the uninitiated.

Part II discusses the impact of Leibnizianism on French opinion from 1710 to 1760. Leibniz enjoyed only limited renown in France at the time of his death, owing to the paucity of his published works available to the public. The *Théodicée* seems to have achieved little widespread popularity. Despite Fontenelle's *Eloge* in 1717 (which dealt mostly with his scientific and scholarly work), there was little general knowledge of Leibnizian metaphysics during the next twenty years. France was going through a reaction against metaphysics, "grounded in a profound distrust of over-subtle argument and over-systematic speculation, born of an understandable weariness with the innumerable *systèmes* produced by amateur metaphysicians" (p. 100). While there were a few books discussing his thought published between 1716 and 1736 (most of them unfavorable), it was not until the advent of Pope and Wolff that there occurred a renewal of French interest in Leibniz's metaphysics and optimism.

By the early 1740s his name was more familiar to the French public than at any time since his death, but he now appeared in a somewhat different light. Wolff's pedantic and arid exposition of Leibnizian philosophy led to a neglect of the broad principles underlying his metaphysics and to a correspondingly greater emphasis on strikingly distinctive features such as monads, pre-established harmony, and sufficient reason. Though the Huguenot exiles Formey and Deschamps succeeded in keeping this philosophy alive in the periodicals, the only outstanding French convert to Leibnizianism of the Wolffian variety was Mme du Châtelet. Even she seems to have lost interest after the publication of her *Institutions de physique* in 1740. A series of refutations, with Condillac's *Traité des systèmes* in the vanguard, "confirmed the French public in its dislike of metaphysics and resulted in a clear decline in interest in the late 1750's" (p. 164).

Meanwhile the controversy occasioned by the French translation of Pope's *Essay on Man* in 1736 fixed the public's attention on Leibnizian optimism. Here, too, the focus had shifted, the theological origins of optimism were clouded, and, instead of being considered a reply to Bayle's Manicheism, it had come to be associated with the belief in the rationality of the universe engendered by the new science. "While Leibniz's argument is essentially *a priori*... for Pope it is the apprehension of order in nature which provides the basis for optimism" (p. 111). Although the Jesuits were willing to distinguish between the views of Leibniz and Pope (while condemning the ideas of both), to the general public there was little, if any, difference between them. Outside France the Leibnizian cause continued to be pleaded for many years; but, with both the Church and the *philosophes* arrayed against it, "little was published in France... which was anything but hostile to

Leibnizian optimism" (p. 172). While the Lisbon earthquake stimulated discussion in the years following 1755, it served in the end merely to strengthen French antagonism toward *tout est bien* or *le meilleur des mondes possibles.*

Part III examines in rather great detail the nature and history of Voltaire's reactions to Leibnizian ideas. In this section of the book, divided into separate chapters on "Voltaire and Leibnizian Metaphysics," "The Problem of Freedom," and "Voltaire and Optimism," the author's arrangement of material leaves something to be desired. Since discussion of the problem of optimism involves reference to free will, there is inevitably an unwelcome amount of repetition. More serious than this, however, is the failure to set these three aspects of Voltaire's thought in their proper perspective or to fit them into the total picture of his intellectual development.

Voltaire's attitude toward Leibniz, as Mr. Barber points out, was mixed; like many other Frenchmen, he admired Leibniz's genius as a scholar and mathematician, but distrusted his religious and philosophical opinions. "When he comes to make a general judgment of Leibniz, he resolves the contradiction only at the expense of Leibniz's sincerity: in the last resort Voltaire cannot convince himself that a man of Leibniz's stature can seriously have held the views he expresses" (p. 176). Firmly convinced of the futility, the absurdity, and the incomprehensibility of all metaphysical systems, he was never able to stomach Leibnizian metaphysics, especially in the form expounded by Wolff: "Cet homme-là ramène en Allemagne toutes les horreurs de la scolastique surchargée de *raisons suffisantes*, de *monades*, d'*indiscernables*, et de toutes les absurdités scientifiques que Leibnitz a mises au monde par vanité, et que les Allemands étudient parce qu'ils sont Allemands" (Moland, XXXVI, 91). This dislike of the metaphysics of Leibniz and Wolff dates from the years 1736-44; after that Voltaire's mind was made up, and he had nothing new to add to his views. Mr. Barber does not attribute to Leibniz much direct influence upon Voltaire's opinions about free will, pointing out that "Voltaire shows no acquaintance ... with Leibniz's own views on the question as expounded in both the *Théodicée* and the correspondence with Clarke" (p. 203).

In the last chapter, Mr. Barber attempts to trace the evolution of Voltaire's attitude toward optimism from an early "superficial agreement" with Pope's views to the final scathing attack on Leibniz contained in *Candide*. It is here, paradoxically, that the author discovers the closest affinities between Voltaire and Leibniz: "Both writers are supremely anxious to see men free to develop their capacity for activity, to eradicate those doctrines which lead them to abandon the struggle and lapse into despair ... [Voltaire] opposes optimism, all question of its credibility apart, on the same grounds on which Leibniz opposed Manicheism" (p 234). Voltaire did not, however, truly understand Leibniz's own intentions and doctrines. His bitter opposition was founded on the opinions of Leibniz's disciples and other optimists, like Pope, who had reduced the individual's role in the universe from that of "active collaborator in God's purposes" to that of mere "victim of the immutable workings of the divine law" (p. 235).

Mr. Barber's interpretation of *Zadig* as a clear expression of Voltaire's determinism is open to serious doubt. Acceptance of the angel Jesrad's optimistic lesson as the basic message of the tale fails to take into account the ideas expressed by Voltaire throughout the rest of the tale. To state that Zadig "is left with no alternative but to stifle his doubts and accept Providence" (p. 220) is to overlook the deeper implications of the hero's "Mais": *moral* evil is not inevitable, and it is man's duty to work for its reduction, if not for its complete elimination. Mr. Barber also contends that the question *beginning* to concern Voltaire most deeply in 1747 was the value of relevance of optimism to the individual human sufferer. It is difficult to square this assertion with Voltaire's conviction, clearly stated as early

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as 1737 in a letter to Frederick, that moral philosophy is of much greater importance to him than any abstract metaphysical question: "Je ramène, toujours, autant que je peux, ma métaphysique à la morale. C'est l'homme que j'examine" (Moland, XXXIV, 320).

The author makes it clear from the very outset that he has no intention of dealing with "any hypothetical influence he [Leibniz] may have exerted on French thinkers" (p. ix). Instead the study is to be limited to explicitly stated reactions to his ideas and to those of his disciples. This self-imposed limitation, perhaps made necessary by the great breadth of Mr. Barber's undertaking, compels him either to neglect completely or to dismiss as relatively unimportant the role played by Leibnizian ideas in the formation of the thought of such outstanding figures as Buffon and Diderot. Another restriction leads the author to pay scant attention to works in French written and published outside France. It is for this reason that he finds fault with André Morize for having cited books by Deschamps, Formey, Crousaz, and others as evidence of French concern with Leibnizian and Wolffian ideas in the years preceding *Candide*. Needless to say, if the author's argument were to be consistently invoked, much of what we refer to as "eighteenth-century French literature" would have to be discarded on the grounds of an Amsterdam, Geneva, or Dresden imprint. In this connection, it should be added that, while Crousaz was a Swiss, and while his works were variously printed in Geneva, Lausanne, The Hague, Amsterdam, and Groningen, his attacks on Pope and Leibniz had sufficient impact in France to warrant more than the brief mention accorded them by Mr. Barber.

One might also feel that the author's sampling of French periodical literature is rather narrow. Of the eleven journals listed in the bibliography, only five were published after 1720; three of these make up the series edited by the Wolffian propagandist Formey (*Bibliothèque Germanique*, 1720-41; *Journal littéraire d'Allemagne*, 1741-43; *Nouvelle Bibliothèque Germanique*, 1746-60), while the remaining two are scientific periodicals (*Journal des Savants* and *Mémoires de Trévoux*). The examination of French literary periodicals, as opposed to primarily scientific ones, would perhaps have permitted Mr. Barber to give us more precise information about the French public's reactions to Leibnizianism during the years 1720-60.

The author's clear style, avoiding the ever-tempting lure of philosophical jargon, and the layout of the book, with its plainly marked chapter subdivisions, make for easy reading and reference. While certain facets of this complex subject have not yet been thoroughly examined, and while the definitive study of Leibniz's influence on eighteenth-century French thought remains to be written, Mr. Barber's book will serve for many years to come as a basic work for anyone interested in the intellectual history of the French Enlightenment.

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IDYLLE EN REALITEIT. HET WERK VAN ELISABETH MARIA POST IN VERBAND MET DE ONTWIKKELING VAN DE EUROPESE LITERATUR IN DE TWEEDE HELFT VAN DE ACHTTIENDE EEUW. By Dr. J. C. Brandt Corstius. Amsterdam: J. M. Meulenhoff, 1955. 119 p.

In the subtitle of his book Dr. Brandt Corstius promises to discuss "the work of Elisabeth Maria Post in connection with the development of European literature in the second half of the eighteenth century." The names of her more famous contemporaries, Betje Wolff and Aagje Deken, may be familiar to students of the epistolary novel, especially since the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of their

death in 1954 was marked by renewed interest in the authors of *Sara Burgerhart*. Elisabeth Maria Post, however, is probably unknown to readers outside The Netherlands, and even most standard histories of Dutch literature make only scant mention of her. Although she also wrote poetry, which gained her a reputation for frankness in her day, she owes her place in literary history mainly to her part in the development of the novel.

But this unpretentious little book makes no claim to rescuing a neglected literary figure. Dr. Brandt Corstius frankly admits that "the subject of the following observations is the work of a mediocre writer, who thanks to this mediocrity, clearly demonstrates a number of general characteristics of European literature in the second half of the eighteenth century" (p. 2). Pursuing his subject from this point of view, he makes a valuable contribution to the comparative study of literature. His book, which has had the support of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Arts, and Sciences, will certainly be of interest to any student of Dutch, German, English, or French literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Brandt Corstius discusses Post's epistolary novels, *Het Land* and *Reinhart of Natuur en Godsdienst*, and her other works, *Voor Eenzaamen, Mijne Kinderlijke Traanen, Gezangen der Liefde, Het Waare Genot des Levens*, and *Ontwaakte Zanglust*. In these works the influence of such different writers as Rousseau, B. de Saint-Pierre, Formey, Florian, Young, Thomson, Ossian, Ewald von Kleist, Gellert, Gessner, Klopstock, Miller, and Hirschfeld is evident. Of all the foreign influences on her work, the German influence was strongest. It is not surprising that she translated Schiller's *Don Carlos* into Dutch.

Although she had no compulsion to tell a story, she wrote a novel that she did not intend to present as a novel at a time when the novel was not yet considered proper. Brandt Corstius gives her ample credit for her part in developing the novel into a respectable literary form. She helped to bring about the end of the pastoral and to pave the way for the romantic novella of rural life.

Brandt Corstius' main interest, however, is in analyzing the change from "idyll to reality," from the static world of the classicists to the dynamic world of the preromantics. In the work of Post he has found an excellent demonstration model. Her view of nature, first of all, contains one of the touchstones for this transition period. Some fifty years ago the Dutch literary historian Kalff pointed out her significance in this respect. Brandt Corstius, after a brief review of the results of subsequent research, emphasizes the fact that Post's originality is the result of an attitude toward nature that was unknown at the beginning of her own century. In her attitude toward nature and toward solitude he finds the key to her situation between classicism and romanticism.

For Post, as for Gessner, the idyll corresponded to an original state of bliss; but Brandt Corstius reminds us that, when Gessner described nature, he wrote of what he had seen with his own eyes. Gessner was Post's favorite author, and she saw nature in the same way that he did. But even more important was her ability to see rural life as it really was; for she knew it too well to believe in an idealized version of it. Brandt Corstius interprets this awakening of social feeling as a characteristic of the sentimental period. He characterizes Reinhart as her Robinson Crusoe. "Reinhart, meditating sensitively on his plantation on the coming centuries of humanity and justice while he watches the slaves working, is no longer the eighteenth-century landowner who philosophizes on nature and society in a Virgilian manner and does not consider his laborers worth mentioning" (p. 111).

Brandt Corstius finds not only Post's treatment of nature but her social consciousness and her religious attitudes of significance in the flow of literary history. Her work contains reflections on the nature of evil and on the perfectibility of the human race, as well as scenes from nature. If she wrote idylls, if she wrote senti-

mental books, it was to show the world as it should be. The sentimental was linked with the ethical and religious nature of man.

Unfortunately Brandt Corstius has provided neither a bibliography nor an index for his book; but the notes at the end of each chapter show that he is familiar with the work of van Tieghem, Lovejoy, Gallaway, Black, Clark, Miles, Wais, and others who have contributed to the understanding of this period. Beginning with Elisabeth Maria Post and her literary works, and touching upon such varied cultural and social phenomena as the vogue of the English garden, pietism, slavery, the increasing role of women in Dutch literary life, and the use of the microscope, he illuminates the nature of the transition from classicism to preromanticism. Along the way he indicates developments that were to lead to the Dutch literary revolution of 1880. The result is a well-written and stimulating study of an important period in European letters.

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THE MISANTHROPE. By Jean Baptiste Poquelin de Molière. Translated by Richard Wilbur. New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1955. xii, 140 p.

SIX PROSE COMEDIES OF MOLIÈRE. Translated by George Graveley. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956. viii, 378 p.

New translations that invite a new generation to read a great dramatic author may well merit study; but those that have, in addition, been chosen for performance deserve even more careful scrutiny. Richard Wilbur's rendering of the *Misanthrope* was first produced at the Poets' Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts on October 25, 1955, and George Graveley's *Forc'd to Be a Doctor* was adapted for a BBC program of July 29, 1953. These recent translations have, therefore, shown enough vitality to be of more than casual interest to comparatists.

All things considered, Richard Wilbur's verse translation of Molière's *Misanthrope* is the best English version of the comedy available. There are, of course, many other published translations in existence. The numerous prose renderings which have been issued since that of John Hughes in 1709 are by their very nature somewhat inadequate. Curtis Hidden Page's blank-verse translation of 1908 is textually faithful, but is poetically unequal to the original. The rhymed versions of Sir Brooke Boothby (1819), Thomas Constable (1898), and William F. Giese (1928) have both virtues and defects; but in general they are a bit too free for translations, and suffer, in addition, from more or less unevenness of quality.

Richard Wilbur deserves recognition for preparing an English version where the meaning of each French line is reproduced with remarkable regularitiy and the form of the original is approximated with uncommon success. It is fortunate that this most recent translator of the *Misanthrope* is a poet. It is even more fortunate that he has brought to his task a profound appreciation of Molière. The subtlety of the translator's introduction to his rendering is but one evidence of his keen and sympathetic insight into the French comic writer's art.

The difficulty of turning the *Misanthrope* into rhymed iambic-pentameter couplets is admittedly great, and one can scarcely expect the author of a verse translation to reproduce exactly every aspect of the original. English is a more compact language than French, and at times Wilbur finds it necessary to repeat a thought in order to fill out a line, as in "I'll tear you limb from limb and joint from joint" (p. 112). Now and then he introduces a figure not in the original, as in "What could our virtues do but gather dust?" (p. 120). Occasionally what the translator adds provides the rhyme, as with the words "you clown" in the line: "Now what d'you mean by all of this, you clown?" (p. 112).

Possibly the greatest problems for the translator of the *Misanthrope* are those of diction and style. Unlike many of his predecessors, Wilbur avoids what he calls "the zounds sort of thing" (p. xii), and this is a welcome departure. But his tendency to reflect to a large degree our contemporary feeling for words and our modern taste in sentence rhythms is not entirely felicitous. The following lines offer an extreme example of the loss that can be sustained:

> "Yes, though she *is* my friend, I say again
> You're very much too good for Célimène.
> She's wantonly misled you from the start."
> (Page 89)

The original has a markedly *précieux* tone:

> "Oui, toute mon amie, elle est et je la nomme
> Indigne d'asservir le cœur d'un galant homme;
> Et le sien n'a pour vous que de feintes douceurs."
> (Lines 1113-5)

Although Wilbur reveals a preference for present-day speech in his version, he does, nevertheless, maintain a great deal of the tone of an earlier age; the balance characteristic of French classic verse is, for example, faithfully rendered in lines such as:

> "Was it no wrong to me, no shame to you,
> That you should send Oronte this billet-doux?"
> (Page 104)

Lines like these succeed in crackling with the sort of elegance that this reviewer deems appropriate for rendering the *Misanthrope*. Richard Wilbur's most striking accomplishment is, of course, that he has successfully translated a full five-act play. The sustained quality of his verse is a notable achievement, and the high degree of artistic unity in his writing is a testimony to his own poetic talent—for the translation of verse is indeed a creative art.

This new version of the *Misanthrope* has been brought out in a charming small edition enhanced by the witty drawings of Enrico Arno, and each copy is autographed by the translator. One can only hope that the publisher will soon find it possible to reissue this translation in an inexpensive edition. It should find its way into the hands of students as well as *connaisseurs*.

George Graveley, the pseudonym of George Graveley Edwards, is a professional actor of some thirty years' experience, who has undertaken to turn six of Molière's prose comedies into actable versions with speakable lines. In the earliest edition of his versions of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* and *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, Graveley maintains that he has not adapted these works but translated them. (The renderings of the two comedies mentioned and those of *L'Avare*, *Les Précieuses ridicules*, *Don Juan*, and *Le Médecin malgré lui* were first issued in three small volumes, two plays to the volume, by W. Cartmel of St. Albans in 1952, 1953, and 1954.) On the jacket to the collected edition published in 1956, the Oxford University Press avers that "Mr. Graveley's versions are remarkable in that they combine truth to his original with the power to *rethink* a foreign text in terms of English."

Graveley's renderings of the six plays read smoothly enough on the whole and often seem quite faithful. The translator has avoided archaisms and modernisms and has succeeded, in general, in writing a text that is easy to understand. The plays are, furthermore, practically intact in his versions. He has, however, in a few instances attenuated the Gallic forthrightness of the original, as in the following modest speech assigned Sganarelle in *Le Médecin malgré lui*: "I only went into the garden, Monsieur, to pluck a rose" (p. 137). Now and then he seems to neglect rendering a phrase, such as "à votre âge" which is not to be found in: "One of

these days, I suppose you'll be going to college to be whipped" (p. 262). On other occasions the translator adds a few words, and in *Les Précieuses ridicules* he gives Du Croisy a brief speech not in the original: "A very good day" (p. 4). In his freer passages, Graveley writes lines such as: "So, if you'll come along with us, Monsieur, I can promise you'll never regret it; and you may name your own price" (p. 115). The original of this sentence reads: "Enfin, monsieur, vous aurez contentement avec nous; et vous gagnerez ce que vous voudrez, en vous laissant conduire où nous prétendons vous mener."

At times Graveley's renderings get further away from the original than this reviewer deems permissible. "Bourgeois" is not, for example, "provincialism" (p. 5), "pédant" is not "pedestrian" (p. 15), and "une personne si bien faite" is not "so rare a jewel" (p. 136). And the most difficult translation problems in these six plays are not always solved skillfully. When Gorgibus condemns among other things the "sonnets et sonnettes" which have turned the head of Cathos and Magdelon, Graveley writes "sonnets and sonnettesses" (p. 29); this solution is, of course, inferior to the imaginative equivalent that A. R. Waller found for the pun: "lays and lies" (*Plays of Molière*, London, 1902, II, 55).

Although Graveley's renderings escape the wooden quality frequently attributed to translations, his work is not altogether satisfactory. In this reviewer's judgment, Graveley's versions do not replace those of Charles Heron Wall, A. R. Waller, Curtis Hidden Page, or John Wood. Unlike Richard Wilbur, George Graveley has not succeeded in outstripping his predecessors.

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The Inspiration Motif in the Works of Franz Grillparzer. With Special Consideration of 'Libussa.' By Gisela Stein. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1955. 223 p.

In spite of the impressive amount of critical literature dealing with one of the most elusive and puzzling of nineteenth-century German dramatists, next to Kleist, the author of this monograph has succeeded in focusing attention on a neglected facet of Grillparzer's work—one, moreover, that requires a great deal of care in the handling. The very term "inspiration" itself, at first glance, might seem forbiddingly vague, were it not for the fact that here this concept is fitted clearly and logically into the developing pattern of Grillparzer's entire life work. Much of Miss Stern's success derives from the fact that the material is presented in a systematic, orderly fashion and from the fact that an indispensable perspective is furnished by placing the dramatist from the start in his proper relation to both eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to classicism as well as to romanticism.

In Chap. I ("Citizen of Weimar") Miss Stein makes it quite clear that Grillparzer, heir of Austrian Josephinism, was oriented unerringly toward Weimar and the ideals of German classicism, though at the same time he shared many of the emotional aspirations and reactions of the German romanticists (Chap. II, "Grillparzer and the Nineteenth Century"). In Chap. III ("The Contact with Schopenhauer") this relationship is succinctly expressed as follows: "If he [Grillparzer] was indebted to classicism for a mastery of form, the ability of execution, an aversion to fragments and the striving for plastic representation, he shared with the romanticists a deep emotion and a realistic-psychological-subjective emphasis" (p. 67). Or, as she expresses it in her concluding chapter even more succinctly, Grillparzer was "a romantic by temperament... a classicist by conviction" (p. 202). The chapter on Schopenhauer, furthermore, is particularly

interesting and important for the light it throws on the conception of history in an Hegelian age by a writer whose drama for the most part drew on historical materials. The analogies between the thinking of Grillparzer and Schopenhauer are traced with considerable care.

Miss Stein disposes summarily in a footnote (and some of her best material seems lodged in footnotes) with any "Baroque" or "Biedermeier" interpretation of her author: "Though Grillparzer's contact with the 'Baroque' and the 'Biedermeier' in specific details cannot be denied... his personal views and his art, nevertheless, do not seem to be sufficiently explained by either... It is likewise true that Grillparzer lived through the period of the 'Biedermeier' which perhaps found its best representative in his contemporary Stifter. Yet our poet directed his conscious efforts toward Weimar and the spiritual climate of German classicism" (p. 96).

This antecedent historical background is required by the author's thesis, since it leads directly to the subject of Grillparzer's conception of "inspiration," beginning with Chap. IV. In his thought, "inspiration" seems to have been a combine of the two German terms "Sammlung" (concentration) and "Begeisterung" (emotional intensity). These two terms are used by him almost synonymously, though Miss Stein's evidence seems to indicate that the first may be a premise for the second. There are abundant references at hand to prove how fervently the poet waited for the only too infrequent visitations of "inspiration," of creative intensity, during long sterile stretches of depression and discouragement. Chaps. IV and V are devoted to a painstaking review of practically everything Grillparzer wrote or said on the subject of "inspiration," in chronological order and with a completeness sometimes tedious and repetitious but no doubt demanded by the scope of the theme. The evidence seems plain that "concentration" and "inspiration" go hand in hand to support the main burden of Grillparzer's aesthetic. Perhaps no two terms could better define the dramatist's position with regard to the two great literary movements of classicism and romanticism. For the substratum of the "inspiration-concentration" concept seems to be a classical balance and a moderate control which served to hold in check the equally valid nervous, emotional, and individualistic forces we have come to associate with nineteenth-century romanticism. To quote Miss Stein again: "The inspiration ideal thus clearly displays the poet's deep emotional anchorage as well as his constant concern for classical balance and moderation. If its undercurrent that is a harmonious concentration coupled with moderate restraint suggests Grillparzer's classical harmony, the actual effects of inspiration—which enable the individual to transcend the confines of reality and to bridge the gap between heaven and earth—betray an affinity with the romantic mind" (p. 202).

The author's final chapter ("'Libussa'—The Last Phase of Inspiration") applies this specific touchstone with warmth and insight to one of the dramatist's greatest and most-discussed plays. After citing all the varied and contradictory critical estimates published since the work's posthumous appearance, Miss Stein concludes that *Libussa* as a whole, and especially the controversial last act, is not intended to signal out any special contemporary political, social, or other message but serves rather "to highlight the tragedy of inspiration in an uninspired age" (p. 199). One is free, of course, to choose one's own favorite interpretation of the drama; but Miss Stein's faithful adherence to the text, supported by the evidence collected from the investigation of all the preceding works, together with her penetrating insight into the Austrian poet's peculiar creative processes, lends great credence to her thesis.

In conclusion, brief mention should be made of the section of "Addenda" to Chap. IV, where the author links up the rationalistic and intuitive components of

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Grillparzer's "inspiration" with contemporary trends among the English romanticists (Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Byron), though here again she is careful to insist on the differences: "Though Grillparzer, unlike these poets, did not believe that its spell [i.e., of the inspiration concept] was to be taken as a revelation of metaphysical truth, a fact clearly implied in their poetic utterances, and though for him this divine power was more closely related to the creative principle of his art, the benevolence, the release, the intuitive insight and the harmonious liberation resulting from its inconstant visits are essentially the same in the concept of the Austrian as in that of the English poets" (p. 152). One only wishes the author had seen fit to extend such excellent aperçus at greater length and perhaps in a broader European context.

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THE ULYSSES THEME: A STUDY IN THE ADAPTABILITY OF A TRADITIONAL HERO. By W. B. Stanford. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954. x, 292 p.

TRAGIC THEMES IN WESTERN LITERATURE. Seven Essays by Bernard Knox, Maynard Mack, Chauncey B. Tinker, Henri Peyre, Richard B. Sewall, Konstantin Reichardt, Louis L. Martz. Edited with an Introduction by Cleanth Brooks. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955. 178 p.

Mr. Stanford's book deals with the character of Ulysses as presented by Homer and with the later treatments of it from Pindar and the Greek tragedians down through Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Calderón, and Tennyson (to name only a few of dozens mentioned) to Joyce and the modern Greek poet Kazantzakis. The book is remarkable not only for its thorough scholarship but for an excellent style, at once incisive and sensitive, which illuminates very sharply both the unity and the variety in the Ulysses figure as it goes down the ages. It is weakest in its critical treatment of the later works: what is actually said about Dante, Shakespeare, Joyce, and others is often oversimplified or even perfunctory. In compensation there is a tight grip on the historical logic of the story, as all the bewildering later metamorphoses of the character are traced back to suggestions in Homer's original portrayal.

The Homeric Ulysses is a leader, as distinct from an institutionalized ruler or an uncomplicated warrior like Ajax. He differs from the other heroes not in being less heroic but in being more wide awake to his real situation, refusing to conventionalize his behavior into the stock patterns of simple heroism. He has preeminently the sense of prudence, is willing to disguise himself or do menial tasks to gain his end, is unwilling to take foolhardy risks, and is eloquent in a purely functional way, his eloquence being designed only to persuade at the moment. He has both the ruthlessness and the eager curiosity that go with the exuberance of leadership, and the inscrutability of a man whom we only see meeting specific situations. He has therefore all the moral ambivalence of a man of action; we do not think of him primarily as a good or bad man, but as having the complex of qualities that one needs to get through certain difficulties. His wisdom is practical and not speculative, a sense of the concrete that makes him more intelligible to women, including Athena, than to men. His greater realism and common sense, which comes out in such things as his remarks on the necessity of eating, remarks that are rather shocking to conventional heroism, indicate a quality in him that is somewhat alien, socially and perhaps even racially, to his environment. He is, after all, the grandson of Autolycus, and, like the Corsican Napoleon in France or the

German Catherine in Russia, he dominates his society all the better for being detached from it.

Yet in his irreducible complexity, his acceptance of all normal human needs, such as food, sex, knowledge, and social approval, he is not so much a type of man as an enlarged portrait of Everyman himself, with all the qualities of human nature that seem indefensible morally and yet are regarded by the gods as somehow worth redeeming. Thus Plato showed him as wishing to be an ordinary man in his next reincarnation, a hint picked up and expanded by Joyce. Thus some of the later Christian allegorists, though not working with Homer's text, saw in him a type of the natural man; something of this comes into Calderón's treatment of him. "Few characters in history or mythology," the author remarks, "can have been regarded in the same epoch as being both a type of villainous treachery and an analogue of the Incarnate Son of God." But the natural man is in a sense both. The same association of Ulysses with man under the law or wrath accounts for a recurrent feeling that there is something Semitic or *ewiger Jude* about Ulysses, another hint that Joyce seized on.

Such is Homer's Ulysses as Mr. Stanford presents him. Of Homer's followers, Shakespeare certainly succeeded in recovering something of the full ambiguity of the original, and for this the author does not give him quite enough credit. Most other treatments of Ulysses are partial, simplified, and tend to reduce him to an invariable moral type. His versatility, for instance, is often generalized into mere wiliness or cunning, in order to make it more accessible to moral judgment. He gets involved, largely by virtue of his dispute with Ajax, in the second half of a *topos* of courage and prudence, a commonplace still doing duty as late as Giraudoux' *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*, where Hector replaces Ajax. In his resourcefulness Ulysses is a figure of comedy rather than tragedy; his affinities are with the tricky slave whose shrewd counsel brings about the successful stratagem. Hence he appears frequently in satyr plays; but in tragedies, where the dramatic interest is focused on the hero of defeat, his self-possession makes him a rather calculating spectator of the action. The unpleasant Ulysses of Euripides' *Hecuba* reflects, the author suggests, the current political debasing of leadership into demagoguery; it certainly reflects the sympathy with the underdog which usually replaces the loss of the sense of buoyant leadership in society. In general Ulysses fared better in ethics than in literature; thus Seneca, the author reminds us, admired him as a Stoic philosopher and vilified him as a dramatist. With the Romans and the glorifying of the Trojans, Ulysses' reputation declined still further, and Christianity, with its strong sense of the futility of all human ruses to escape divine wrath, conferred on him the somber tragic *hybris* that we see in Dante's figure.

Even in the Renaissance, with its renewed sense of the importance of leadership, the elements in the *polytropos* complex of Homer remained for the most part still unravelled. In later centuries we have a "classical" Ulysses who is a prudent or crafty statesman, and a "romantic" Ulysses who is a lonely Byronic wanderer, like Tennyson's, and who, in striking contrast to Homer's hero, wants to go anywhere but home. In Joyce this second theme is attached to a second character, Stephen, leaving the main Ulysses figure Bloom with the centripetal, home-seeking tendency of the original. In Kazantzakis' *Odyssey* there is a more ambitious combining of the wanderer and statesman themes that expands Ulysses into a representative of the spirit of modern man as he builds one form of civilization after another. The Kazantzakis poem is unknown to the present reviewer; from Mr. Stanford's account it sounds like an inordinately pretentious philosophical melodrama of the *Peer Gynt* variety.

It is a fascinating story that Mr. Stanford has to tell, and one that will enlarge

the literary perspective of any reader. The chief moral perhaps is *habent sua fata libelli;* tradition itself plays a creative role in literature. The author is careful to distinguish facts of history from facts of literary tradition, and to give the latter their rightful place. The unity of the Homeric poems, for instance, is unquestionably a fact of literary tradition. At the very end of the book, in his last footnote, he suggests that the character of Ulysses may be one of the "archetypes" dealt with by the school of Jung, which locates them in the collective unconscious of the total human mind. It certainly is an archetype in the only sense in which a literary critic needs the term: a theme which carries centuries of literary development with it, and yet in each age is as fresh as ever, and as infinitely suggestive of new modes of treatment.

Tragic Themes in Western Literature is a series of public lectures given by professors of the Yale faculty on tragedies and tragic writers. The successful public lecture is something of a tour de force of range finding; one has to stress the values which the specialist and nonspecialist both feel to be fundamental. This book is an excellent series of public lectures, and makes a readable collection of essays, most of them perhaps not critically of any more lasting importance. That the book hangs together as well as it does is due chiefly to the immense cohesive force of the conception "tragedy" itself, which can bring out all sorts of coincidences in technique and characterization even in a series of largely independent studies.

Three of the lecturers, Chauncey B. Tinker on *Samson Agonistes*, Richard B. Sewall on *The Brothers Karamazov*, and Konstantin Reichardt on *Rosmersholm*, stay within the normal lecturing area of summary and general comment. Henri Peyre's study of *Phèdre*, apart from a somewhat centrifugal introduction, does a remarkable job of putting Racine into the perspective of Western culture, bringing out among other things a curious and significant link between Racine and Dostoevsky. Bernard Knox's sensitive and closely reasoned critique of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, which I think the best essay in the book, makes a most suggestive unity out of a series of sharp observations on the imagery and diction of the play. One profound comment is worth pondering: "The relation between the prophecy and Oedipus' actions is not of cause and effect. It is the relation suggested by the metaphor, the relation of two independent entities which are equated." Maynard Mack makes a similar kind of analysis of *Hamlet*, pointing out the central importance of the words "show," "act," and "play," and thus indicating that the sense of bewildering puzzle that everyone feels in *Hamlet* is not the result of failure, as a rash essay of Eliot suggests, but deliberately contrived; the whole play carries on the mood of the opening scene, which "creates a world where uncertainties are of the essence." Louis L. Martz, speaking mainly of *Murder in the Cathedral* and *Saint Joan*, is more concerned than the others with tragedy as a genre, and raises the question whether a character without *hamartia* can be a tragic hero, or heroine. He decides, very sensibly, that the term tragedy relates to a varied group and not to an archetypal model: "not a scale of value, but a spectrum of various qualities."

NORTHROP FRYE

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LE THÈME DU RHIN DANS L'INSPIRATION DE GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE. By Pierre Orecchioni. Paris: Lettres Modernes, 1956. 140 p.

The inclusion of nine of Apollinaire's early poems in *Alcools*, under the heading "Rhénanes," has caused considerable speculation as to their place in the poet's work, whether taken as a group or singly. Investigation has revealed that they

grew out of a year's sojourn in the Rhineland (1901-02), when the poet served as tutor in a household of some distinction. Apollinaire himself spoke little or not at all of this experience, yet its influence is felt in many poems other than the nine "Rhénanes." Interest in the poet's Rhineland experience has centered for the most part around his sentimental attachment to the English governess, Annie Playden, particularly because of the repercussions in the admirable *Chanson du Mal-Aimé*. It was largely through the efforts of the German scholar Ernst Wolf, in his dissertation, *Guillaume Apollinaire und das Rheinland* (Bonn, 1937), that light was first cast on other important aspects of that period. Now, some two decades later, another scholar has re-examined the entire question of Rhenish influence on Apollinaire.

In the introduction to his work Pierre Orecchioni takes issue almost at once with one of Wolf's principal theses, and, incidentally, one of Apollinaire's claims—that the poet had grasped the essence of the Rhenish spirit and communicated it in his work. The author then divides his study into two parts, in the first of which he seeks to define a system of aesthetics for Rhenish lyric poetry in general and to examine Apollinaire's poems in the light of his definition. The results of his inquiry lead him to conclude that Apollinaire's contact with Rhenish tradition was entirely superficial and incomplete: ". . . il semble que du merveilleux germanique il n'ait vu que le petit côté" (p. 92). Then in the second part he underlines what he terms authentic Rhenish elements wherever they may occur in Apollinaire's poems, to determine the place of these poems in the tradition of the Rhineland in French literature, and to locate, if possible, a Rhenish period or "mythe rhénan" in Apollinaire's works.

We can have no quarrel with the first part of Orecchioni's study. It is a valuable piece of work, well organized and clearly presented. In it the author first concerns himself with aspects of a conventional Rhineland, the Rhineland discovered by casual tourists and romantic novelists. Traits of the conventional Rhineland abound in Apollinaire's poems and carry over even to his preoccupation with Germanic names. Turning then to questions more authentically Rhenish, Orecchioni undertakes a study of the *Lied* and its influence on the French poet. He distinguishes, as did Wolf, between the *Volkslied* and the *Kunstlied*, and agrees with the German scholar concerning the influence of the former. With regard to the *Kunstlied*, however, he disputes Wolf's claim that Apollinaire's *Loreley* is a free translation of Brentano's *Lore Lay*. By analyzing fundamental distinctions between the two versions he demonstrates that Apollinaire's effort was not to imitate, but rather to inform his poetry with the spirit of the Rhineland. He cites in substantiation of his theory Apollinaire's persistent use of the irrational, the absurd, the surprising, together with an almost total absence of dramatic effects. Orecchioni is quite justified in his claim that any attempt to compare Apollinaire with such writers as Heine or Lenau must be entirely subjective. The frequent similarity of theme points to a kind of "sensibilité du lied" on the part of the French poet, but offers no evidence of specific influence.

Convinced that the foregoing approach has produced only negative results, Orecchioni next reorients his study for the purpose of seeking in the poetry of Apollinaire a Rhenish current or myth which would be threefold: (1) "Dionysus rhénan," defined somewhat mysteriously as an "état privilégié où l'esprit, surexcité par la vertu quelque peu diabolique du vin de la Moselle, atteint une sorte de ferveur exceptionnelle, d'extase, qui lui livre les clés de la magie et de l'incantation"; (2) the river, sentimental companion symbolizing the flow of life; (3) nostalgia for a mediaeval Rhineland. It should be noted that the first two elements occupy a much larger place in Apollinaire's poetry than the third. On the other hand, the third alone is exclusively Rhenish in character. There is no reason

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to think that the intoxicating values of wine or the symbolic value of a river were revealed to the poet during his sojourn in the Rhineland. In his previous experience there were, after all, French wines and the Seine. Apollinaire's contribution to the Rhenish tradition in French literature is negligible. Orecchioni does well to point out that such a tradition belongs entirely in the nineteenth century. Even in 1901 Apollinaire was already too far removed from the romantic and symbolist appeal of the Rhineland to be seriously impressed.

Orecchioni provides a fitting summation of his efforts when he says: "Pour Apollinaire, le Rhin n'est pas autre chose qu'un cadre sentimental, dont le charme séduit un moment, puis est vite oublié" (p. 11). However, evidently believing that he has too greatly diminished the significance of the Rhineland in Apollinaire's work, and in an effort to restore importance to the entire question, Orecchioni suggests that the period of *Alcools*, from 1901 to 1912, might be termed Apollinaire's "époque rhénane." He reaches this conclusion by rather specious argument. First he states that "avant de composer les 'Rhénanes,' Apollinaire est encore loin d'être en possession du toutes les ressources de son art, et on le sent encore très étroitement prisonnier de la lettre du symbolisme..." (p. 128); then with reference to the Rhineland he finds that "sous l'impulsion peut-être de ce dépaysement qui le force à briser sa coquille, on assiste à un renouvellement rapide de ses moyens, à un élargissement considérable: on peut considérer qu'il n'y aura plus de découverte essentielle faite par lui entre son retour de Rhénanie et la publication d'*Alcools* en 1913" (p. 128). He justifies this last statement by admitting only the most general themes: "ce qui domine dans toute cette période qui va jusqu'en 1913 et fait son unité, c'est que l'inspiration d'Apollinaire est tournée vers le passé, vers l'exploitation des thèmes de la tradition, et particulièrement vers ceux du lyrisme sentimental, le thème du souvenir et celui de la destinée" (p. 128).

Having now established the beginning of a period and having determined its unity, he then alludes to Apollinaire's later work, *Calligrammes*, in order to justify marking the end of the period: "substituer la poésie des sens à celle du sentiment, telle est la révolution qu'Apollinaire annonce dans les premiers poèmes de *Calligrammes* et c'est ce 'changement de front' (soudain ou lentement mûri, peu importe) qui pourra permettre de dater précisément la fin de l'époque rhénane, ou plutôt de l'influence de cette époque" (p. 129).

The foregoing reasoning demonstrates quite well that *Alcools* is something more than a random grouping of poems written over a dozen years—that it is also a book in which all parts combine to point to a single orientation of mind on the part of the poet. However, to place the label of Rhenish on the whole period is to attribute an exaggerated importance to the locale in which the poet happened to be when he began to come of age poetically, as well as to neglect entirely the significance of other influences. Apollinaire's propensity toward strong emotional attachments better explains the dominant note of sentimental lyricism than does the mere fact of his having visited the Rhineland. Furthermore, it hardly seems likely that Apollinaire's relations with the cubist painters as well as his discovery of the poetry of Lautréamont, Rimbaud, Jarry and Jacob—which events all occurred after his Rhineland experience—could be of so little consequence as to be part of a more vast "Rhenish period." It is more probable that, in concentrating his efforts on a small part of *Alcools*, Orecchioni has lost sight of the major influences.

Despite the weakness of the second part of Orecchioni's book, we are grateful for his significant contribution toward the clarification of the work of Apollinaire.

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STUDI SULLA DIVINA COMMEDIA. By Aldo Vallone. Florence: Olschki, 1955. 174 p.

Aldo Vallone, author of *La critica dantesca contemporanea* (Pisa, 1953), is himself turning out to be a sharpsighted Dante critic, combining his own observations with skillful criticism of the competent *dantisti* before him. In the first of these five studies, "Per la datazione della 'Divina Commedia'" (pp. 3-18), he supposes the *Inferno* composed before 1308, the *Purgatorio* after 1308, the *Paradiso* after 1316. He discusses the historical events mentioned in the *DC*, and agrees with Scherillo and Egidi that the important chronological *brano* (1310) of the *Chronicle* of Barberini is a genuine document.

The second article, "Il Dialogo nella 'Vita nuova' e nel 'Purgatorio'" (pp. 21-38), considers the development of dialogue in Dante. In the *Vita nuova* there is only an interior monologue, short, visionary, or defective; in the *Inferno* dialogue cannot develop since there is no real communication; in the *Paradiso* it is not spontaneous, it is only *celebrazione;* in the *Purgatorio,* however, it is truly human. Some fine distinctions are made, but with meager results. The souls uttering their "O anima... !" when they see that Dante is in the flesh are not, I think, expressing their bewilderment but are simply excited about the exceptional opportunity to ask for suffrages for their release.

Valuable for its abundant information, the third study, "Con Dante tra commenti e 'lecturae' d'oggi" (pp. 41-67), reviews the numerous interpretations of single *canti* of the *DC* in Florence, Rome, Sicily, and elsewhere, and stresses the new insights achieved recently by linguists and stylisticians such as Terracini, Contini, Chiappelli, etc. Vallone's criticism would be still more pertinent if he were sufficiently acquainted with Dante criticism outside Italy. One cannot discuss the comic style without Spitzer's "The Farcical Elements in *Inferno*," *MLN*, LVIII (1944), 83-88, nor the art relations (see p. 60, note 6) without Yvonne Bâtard's impressive study on Dante and the Botticelli illustrations, nor the aesthetic use of mediaeval sources without mentioning the pioneer in this field, Charles Singleton, nor the rhetorical tradition without mentioning Curtius, nor the Ulysses question without the "curiosity" interpretation of Hugo Friedrich. Vallone sees clearly that Croce's romantic-subjective attitude has given way to "il più rigoroso metodo della filologia stilistica" (p. 56). This study can be read in an abridged form in *Cultura Neolatina*, XIV (1954), 217-227.

Three of Vallone's *lecturae* are centered around "Cortesia e stile in tre canti della 'Commedia'" (pp. 71-128). We learn, e.g., that in *Purg.*, VII Nino Visconti gently explains that his widow, Beatrice d'Este, by her second marriage degraded herself from a *donna* to a *femmina*, and that the expression *grembo di Maria* for "Heaven" implies that the angels come to protect the souls in the Antipurgatorio through the intercession of Mary as "madre amorosa verso i suoi figli bisognosi." In *Purg.*, XXVI, the canto of the lustful, the very unity consists in "serenante dolcezza ed intima cortesia." The "generica cortesia si concretizza" in the charitable, elegant addresses: "O anime sicure d'aver, quando che sia, di pace stato." In *Par.*, XI St. Francis himself, a troubadour *a lo divino*, is presented as the courteous "Santo più umano... non miracolistico"; this interpretation cannot be justified by Dante's source, Tommaso de Celano, who says: "Quasi sol oriens in mundo beatus Franciscus vita... *et miraculis* claruit." Some of these remarks will find their place in the commentaries of the future.

The last article, "Dante e la 'Commedia' come tema letterario dell'Ottocento" (pp. 131-166), is a filler of slighter interest, showing mainly anticlerical, patriotic, sentimental, and aesthetic exploitation of the topics: Dante, the "father of Italy"; Francesca; Pia; Manfredi; Ugolino. Vallone's forte is interpretation.

H. H.

LAS SONATAS DE VALLE INCLÁN. By Alonso Zamora Vicente. Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1955. 194 p.

This study first appeared in the *Colección de Estudios Estilísticos* (Buenos Aires, 1951), and won the approval of the critics. I have already mentioned it favorably in my *Critical Bibliography of the New Stylistics* (American ed., No. 1544; Spanish ed., No. 750). This new edition is augmented by a chapter called "Musicalidad, Ritmos" (pp. 181-192), which makes it clear that Professor Zamora Vicente sees in the sonatas a *Gestalt* different from that seen by his late master, Amado Alonso, in *Verbum*, XXI (1928), 31 ff.

While Alonso thought that the intertwining of the religious, sensuous, and macabre motifs produces an adequate syntactic form on all verbal levels, Zamora Vicente sees the overall rhythm as bipartite, reflecting rather the contrasts in the hero, the Marqués de Bradomín, a "Don Juan contradictorio," "religioso y galante," "confusionista de virtud y de pecado." Bradomín is characterized, however, in the novel itself by the famous triad "feo, católico y sentimental." Zamora Vicente still would say that the dychotomy *paganismo : cristianismo, piedad : perversión* is the typical "mezcla tan ilustradora de la técnica modernista." I cannot help siding in this matter with Amado Alonso, but can see Zamora Vicente's point. He thinks the tripartite rhythm is something subordinate and consciously decorative ("máquina poética") throughout the prose of Valle Inclán, and points out that it was detected even in his very early writings by William L. Fichter. He consequently believes that this rhythm has nothing to do with the theme, and in many cases, where a triad seems to show up, reveals itself as a bipartite rhythm in which a heavier splittable protasis is followed by a lighter apodosis. He thus seems to believe rather in an independent descriptive method, *coûte que coûte*, than in the "anthropological" method of Amado Alonso and the "vinculative" method of Dámaso Alonso.

The "stylistic" side of his study begins on p. 132 with stage setting, gestures, use of tenses, enumeration of sounds and noises (*ruidos, susurros, murmullos*), shades of light, etc. The first part is nothing but a breaking down of thematic, characterological, and motivistic aspects (*donjuanismo, satanismo, superstición*, and the wonderful pages on the *paisaje aristocratizado*, etc.), very valuable in themselves and documented with a plethora of examples; but this is simply a phenomenological approach to the more or less manifest subject matter, as initiated during the 1920s in Germany by Bertram, Gundolf, and Curtius. The transitional chapters ("Pintura," "Clasicismo francés," "Compostela," "Literatura") are stylistic insofar as they discuss the aesthetic sources of Valle Inclán's "sobresaturación literaria." They are avowedly patterned on Amado Alonso's technical study of Larreta's *La gloria de Don Ramiro*. To the aesthetic sources cited should be added—it seems to me—the All Saints Litany (*Todos los santos Patriarcas, todos los santos Padres, todos los santos monjes*, p. 55), the archpriest of Hita (*a los que violan doncellas y a los que incendian mieses*, p. 70), and, for the sensational impressionism, the Goncourts.

Zamora Vicente as a linguist and philologist is attracted by Valle Inclán's language, to which unfortunately he does not devote enough space. As soon as he touches the linguistic domain(*frases arcaicas, semigallegas, semiaragonesas*) he becomes excellent (see the chapter, "Voces al fondo," pp. 175 ff.). He also has the awareness to distinguish the four sonatas in his illustrated lists and samplings, very neatly referring to them as *sonata italiana, mexicana, galaica*, and *navarra*. His intuition did not go so far, however, as to take each sonata as a style-conditioning artifact which modifies in a particular way the lexicological and syntactic features (use of tenses) which appear in all four of them. If, in other words, the *habla* of the *Sonatas* had been referred not only to the *lengua* but also to the distinctive

structure of the single sonatas, this would have turned out to be a modern and original study of stylistic structure rather than another commendable *mise au point* of the many studies which have been done on the *Sonatas*.

One point remains to be cleared up. A generation which has become existentially engaged cannot sever such a wanton and irresponsible aestheticism as that of the *Sonatas* from the problem of life. Therefore, when our critic reads a doomed Spain out of *gamineries* of Don Ramón: "Viejo pueblo del sol y de los toros, así conserves ... tu genio mentiroso, hiperbólico, jacaresco y ... te aduermas ... consolado de tus grandes dolores, perdidas para siempre la sopa de los conventos y las Indias! ¡Amen!," he loses the contemplative serenity of the detached stylistician and exclaims: "Hé aquí el punto débil ... Exceso de quimera cuando la realidad está clamando ..." Why does he not "lose his temper" confronted with Valle Inclán's perversities, obscenities, and blasphemies? "Stilforschung" seems bound to make a decision for clear-cut values, or else to stick to outgrown historical relativism. It cannot have both.

H. H.

Mezzo secolo de "La Figlia di Jorio." By Tito Rosina. Genoa: Casa Editrice Giuseppe Principato, 1955. 408 p.

This carefully elaborated, marvelously printed, and lavishly illustrated (138 plates) volume is a "Rettung," in Lessing's sense, of the well-known fifty-year-old drama by Gabriel d'Annunzio. Rosina's monograph on a single work is less a "chef-d'œuvre expliqué" than the study of an "événement littéraire." He describes the creative origin of the play from the picture of Michetti, and its "myth" or radiation reflected in criticism, staging, parodies, transformations into operas and films, and correspondence between the author and actors, stage managers, painters, and musicians. We learn of the jealousy and competition among actresses who wished to play the principal role (e.g., Eleonora Duse and Irma Grammatica), of translations in all languages, including Sicilian and Abruzzese, and of the triumphant march of the play from Milan to all of Italy, to Paris, to all the countries of Europe, even the Eastern and Slavic parts, and to both Americas.

However, a popular and successful play is not necessarily a great drama. The splendid language, the excellent dramatic structure, the balancing of the acts, the symmetry of scenes, and the well-observed customs, superstitions, and beliefs of the Abruzzi cannot blind us to the bourgeois romanticism of the plot, in which Mila di Codra, a *putta del villagio*, "di fenile e di stabbio," becomes the great love of a young peasant, Aligi, lives with him in a "chaste concubinage," and is burnt by the populace after having declared herself the murderess of her lover's father, although the murderer actually was Aligi. Tito Rosina claims for the play the character of a pastoral tragedy worthy of the Greeks, of timeless Arcadian musical poetry, of a drama reflecting the pagan-Catholic synthesis of the Italian peasant soul, of a "sacra rappresentazione," of a situation reflecting in principle the eternal passions and conflicts of primitive and patriarchal cultures, nay of mankind. He cites in support of his own favorable judgment the positive criticisms made after the first performances of the play in Italy and France. But those critics were in the same fit of bourgeois romanticism as was D'Annunzio. I suspect that, with all his erudition, thoroughness, and enthusiasm, Signor Rosina will not make the present generation believe that D'Annunzio's melodrama is a great tragedy. The study remains a fine example of the industrious philological method (256 notes, many facsimiles, six documentary appendices) and of its limitations; philology stops where true literary criticism begins.

H. H.

DEL VELTRO DANTESCO. Lectura Dantis Siciliana. By Aldo Vallone. Edizioni Accademia di Studi "Cielo D'Alcamo," 1955. 26 p.

Aldo Vallone follows Pedrina, Malagoli, and Sapegno in declaring that Dante's *veltro* cannot be identified at all and is simply "un uomo migliore in un mundo migliore." I should have preferred to see this "thesis" demonstrated without the sacrifice of two victims, Renucci and Olschki, together with their *veltri*, Pope Benedict XI and Dante himself, respectively. I admit that Renucci has been discredited; but Olschki's *Dante "poeta veltro"* (Florence, 1953) seems to be a logical development of his earlier Dioscuri study. Vallone picks out good points for his criticism of earlier reviewers, but much of his own evaluation is in the same sweeping fashion as his repetition of the old irresponsible identification "un cinquecento dieci e cinque" (*Purg.*, XXXIII, 43) with *dux*, although DXV is never DVX.

H. H.

SAGGISTICA LETTERARIA ITALIANA: BIBLIOGRAFIA PER SOGGETTI: 1938-1952. By Joseph G. Fucilla. Florence: Sansoni Antiquariato, 1956. 285 p. (Contributi alla Biblioteca Bibliografica Italica diretta da Marino Parenti, Vol. XII.)

Those who are acquainted with Professor Fucilla's monumental *Universal Author Repertoire of Italian Essay Literature* (New York, 1941) will heartily welcome its sequel, the present *Saggistica*. The earlier bibliography listed some 18,000 miscellaneous essays contained in 1,697 volumes published in Italy between 1821 and 1938. To these the author added in 1953 a supplement listing the contents of 72 more volumes of essays (*L'Italia che scrive*, XXXVI, 30, 56-58). The *Saggistica*, although it covers the brief period of fifteen years, lists more than 6,000 studies found in 533 volumes. The plan of the work is the clear, simple, economical one of its predecessor—an alphabetical listing of the volumes followed by a second index with name of author, title of essay, a number cross-reference to the book in the first index of which the essay forms a part, and finally the pages covered by the study. The essays themselves vary greatly in length. Quite a few are scarcely more than reviews of from two to five pages. This applies particularly to those dealing with individual plays. The vast majority, however, are articles of average size (from eight to twenty pages), and substantial studies ranging in length from 30 to 100 pages or more are to be found. Not all the essays, of course, are of the same quality; yet any process of selection might have seriously impaired the value of the bibliography. Realizing this, Professor Fucilla wisely eliminated only those studies of no apparent importance and retained all the others. In other words, he has aimed at relative completeness, leaving the critical evaluation of his materials to the judgment of the potential users of his compilation. For such a decision they cannot but be grateful.

The *Saggistica*, like the *Universal Author Repertoire*, is of undoubted value to students of Italian literature. The two volumes provide a precious supplement to the *Repertorio bibliografico* compiled by Professor Prezzolini and others and to the various bibliographies in the *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, the *Rassegna bibliografica*, *Italica*, *Italian Studies*, *Studies in Philology*, *PMLA*, etc. They quickly reveal how constant has been the favor accorded to major Italian authors from Dante and Petrarch to Carducci and D'Annunzio, how greatly the fortunes of once popular writers like Aleardi, De Amicis, Giusti, Guerrazzi, Prati have waned, and what contemporary authors are most studied in Italy today. It is interesting that, whereas Moravia, Silone, and Svevo are the Italian writers of fiction best known in the United States, in Italy they command far less attention than do Bacchelli, Bontempelli, Moretti, and Palazzeschi.

For the comparatist the *Saggistica*, like the *Universal Author Repertoire* before it, is a far more important research tool than the *Repertorio bibliografico* or any of the periodical bibliographies. Consulting these volumes is, in fact, the first indispensable step for anyone studying the *fortuna* or influence of a foreign author in Italy. The *Saggistica* alone contains more than 1,800 entries on foreign writers, a good third of which concern French literature. Other literatures, in decreasing order of number of entries, are English, German, Latin, American, ancient Greek, Spanish, Russian. There are 62 entries on Shakespeare, which, combined with the 139 entries in the *Universal Author Repertoire* and its supplement, attest most eloquently to the constant prestige of the bard of Avon in the land of Dante. The same is more or less true of Goethe (represented by 43 entries in the *Saggistica* and 116 in the earlier bibliographies). But the vogue of the once popular Hugo and Zola has considerably decreased, to judge from the eight titles for the first and twelve for the second in the *Saggistica*. It is heartening to discover that American literature is not so neglected in Italy as one might be led to believe. Most of the better-known American writers are represented by at least three or four entries each, while there are as many as eleven for Melville and thirteen for Poe.

The comparatist must also be grateful to the *Saggistica* for placing at his disposal not only lists of essays on single foreign authors but also for studies of a comparative nature, such as "Balzac e Manzoni," "Dante e Balzac," "Carducci e Baudelaire," "Capuana e Zola," "Milton e Dante nelle opere di Keats," "Dante e la Spagna," "Leopardi e Rousseau," "Poe e Manzoni," "Whitman e Proust," "Ungaretti e Racine," "T. S. Eliot e Eugenio Montale," "Shakespeare in Russia," "Shakespeare e Cervantes," "Foscolo e Sterne," "Sterne e Marivaux," and countless others.

The *Saggistica* is an extremely useful work which no library can afford to be without. It performs an invaluable service to students of both Italian and comparative literature and pays eloquent tribute to the perennial vitality of literary and critical studies in Italy. Let us hope that Professor Fucilla will continue to furnish us with periodical supplements.

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RUSSIAN FORMALISM: HISTORY—DOCTRINE. By Victor Erlich. The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1955. xiv, 276 p.

This book deserves a warm welcome from all students of literature. It is the first adequate study of one of the most important schools of modern criticism—one far too little known outside of Russia and forcibly silenced there. The Russian Formalists and their ideas have at last been judiciously examined by a free scholar thoroughly at home in the literature and literary theory of both Russia and the West

Mr. Erlich has divided his material into "history" and "doctrine"—somewhat arbitrarily, perhaps, since the "history" is itself a history of "doctrine," i.e., of ideas and their evolution. But the distinction is not meaningless, since in his section on "doctrine" he attempts to do something the Formalists themselves never did—give a complete, synthetic presentation of the tenets of this school. The historical section, on the other hand, provides a chronological account of the movement, assesses its relations, hostile and filial, to its antecedents, and describes the intellectual climate in which it emerged. It then goes on to detail the Formalists' battle with the Marxists in the 1920s and their ultimate defeat and suppression about 1930 by the fiat of the Stalinist state. Finally, Mr. Erlich shows how offshoots of Formalism for a time developed promisingly in neighboring Slavic countries, Czechoslovakia

and Poland, only to fall victim in their turn to the monolithic stupidities of neo- (or pseudo-) Marxism.

Historically speaking, the Formalists, like our New Critics, represented a necessary and fruitful reaction against the long dominion of various extrinsic approaches to literature. They ridiculed the sterile biographism of traditional academic scholarship, with its endless proliferation of meaningless detail (their favorite example, a learned article entitled "Did Pushkin Smoke?" has an exact parallel in Browning's famous question, "What porridge had John Keats?"). They continued the fight against the old "civic"—social and political—tradition of nineteenth-century Russian criticism, the same tradition which in a hideously caricatured "Marxist-Leninist" variant was eventually to crush them with the might of its secular arm. At the same time they opposed another kind of "ideological" heresy, the tendency of some of the Symbolists and their followers (e.g., Berdjaev) to treat literature as a vehicle for divine revelations or at least as a well of philosophical profundities to be extracted by the critic. As Roman Jakobson, one of the Formalists' most forceful spokesmen, put the matter: "Hitherto most historians of literature have been like policemen who, when their aim is to arrest a specific individual, 'just in case' seize everyone and everything found in his quarters, as well as people accidentally passing by in the street."

Instead, the Formalists insisted that the primary object of literary study should not be the mind or the menu of the poet, nor his society, his ideas about it or its about him or the critic's about what either of these should have been, but the work itself. The student's job is to describe and analyze the work of art as an independent entity, to explain "how it was made." And since in the case of literature the work of art is a structure of words, the Formalists regarded the definition and analysis of the medium of literature, "language in its esthetic function," as their most pressing immediate task. It is in this primary linguistic orientation, it seems to me, that the Formalists differ most markedly from the New Critics.

Many of the leading Formalists, like Jakobson and Vinogradov, were themselves professional linguists; they sought to carry over into literary studies the methods of synchronic structural analysis formulated for linguistics by de Saussure and his disciples. They thus tended to work from the bottom up, so to speak; their knowledge of the phonemic, morphological, syntactic, and lexical structure of the language concerned enabled them to recognize the artistic utilization of these elements in literature and to subject them to the rigorous and systematic analysis for which their linguistic training had prepared them. The question of the overall emotional or philosophical "meaning" of the work and its relevance to "life" was generally postponed for later consideration, and in the polemics of the early Formalists its very validity was even denied. In their quest for scientific rigor and purity of discipline the Formalists thus sometimes excluded too much and unduly limited the significance of literature as a human activity. But, on the other hand, their linguistic "scientism" made them strongest where the New Critics have been weakest, namely in their treatment of what might be called the phonic aspects of literature. The investigations of Jakobson, Brik, Tomashevskij, Zhirmunskij, Eichenbaum, and others in the fields of metrics, rhythmics, and melodics for both poetry and prose comprise some of the best work done in this area in modern times. But the Formalists were not only phoneticians. Their studies of rhetorical and compositional devices in fiction and their conceptualizations of problems of literary history are less systematic and rigorous than their investigations of poetic language, but they are invariably stimulating and often contain insights of permanent value.

No doubt many of the Formalist slogans were immature and exaggerated, and many were less novel than they seemed when born in the heat of battle with the

philistines. The age of realism, particularly in Russia, had been a period when questions of literary form had not only been shamefully neglected by students of literature, but even declared frivolous and immoral.

Unlike the New Critics, the Formalists tended to dodge the problem of evaluation, which has always stubbornly evaded attempts to bring it within the range of a scientific methodology. Theoretically they espoused a complete critical relativism in which value judgments had only historical interest as agents in the process of literary innovation and change; in practice they were often thoroughly subjective in applying considerations of their personal taste, partly because these were not openly recognized and had to be smuggled in by the back door.

Finally, the Formalists never developed their ideas into a complete philosophical system; as Mr. Erlich points out, they did not produce "a comprehensive scheme of literary creation, grounded in a coherent esthetics and integrated into a full-blown philosophy of culture." But then, no more did anyone else. As Mr. Erlich observes with equal justice, the Formalist theoreticians by no means labored in vain; their studies of versification, style, composition, and literary history constitute "one of the highpoints of modern critical thought." Happily, English-speaking readers now have available to them an excellent comprehensive guide to their ideas.

Mr. Erlich's account of Formalism is vigorous, thorough, and discriminating. He is completely in command of his subject: he has assimilated a vast amount of abstruse writing without getting either lost or overloaded, and he had the advantage of direct association with one of the Formalist leaders, Roman Jakobson, who helped him as only a living participant in such a movement can. Yet Mr. Erlich has maintained his independence. Though decidedly sympathetic to the Formalist position and always fair in his exposition of their ideas, he is not afraid to point out errors and inconsistencies. His attitude toward his heroes is almost paternal; invariably sensible and wise, he gently chides them for their extravagances, proudly praises them for their successes, and vigorously defends them against the attacks of their enemies. They could hardly ask for a better advocate in the English-speaking world.

There is, however, a certain disadvantage to Mr. Erlich's fatherliness, and it is this which constitutes my only serious objection to his work. He has not quite succeeded in conveying the vitality and gaiety and wit that his subjects so notably possessed. In their early days, at least, they never dreamed they comprised anything so staid and dreary as a "school"; they were a lively group of very young very clever, and very irreverent students who met occasionally in Moscow and Petersburg cafés to talk about poetry. It is this spirit of youthful exuberance and lightheartedness that is sometimes lost in Mr. Erlich's ponderous apparatus, with its somewhat pedantic system of cross-references and its insistent quoting of literary pundits the world over. But the objection is not a substantial one. To utilize a familiar distinction which all good Formalists thoroughly abhor, *Russian Formalism* has a few deficiencies of form, but its content is rich and strong.

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